

THE
ROMANCE
OF
REAL LIFE.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH. *Mrs*
t

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

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Published by the same Author,

ELEGIAC SONNETS.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

PRICE 3*s.*



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A Literary friend, whose opinion I greatly value, suggested to me the possibility of producing a few little volumes, that might prove as attractive as the most romantic fiction, and yet convey all the solid instruction of genuine history. He affirmed, that the voluminous and ill-written French work, entitled *Les Causes Célèbres*,

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bres, might furnish me with very ample materials for so desirable a purpose. He advised me to select such stories from this collection, as, though disfigured by the affectation and bad taste of the compiler, Guyot de Pitaval, might lead us to form awful ideas of the force and danger of the human passions. He wished me to consider myself as under no restriction, but that of adhering to authenticated facts; and, by telling each story in my own way, to render it as much as possible an interesting lesson of morality.

This hint appeared to me so captivating,

captivating, that I began the attempt suggested with great pleasure; but soon became sensible of many difficulties I had to encounter. The style of the original is frequently obscure; the facts are often anticipated, and often repeated, in almost the same words, in different parts of the story: they are also often interrupted by remarks, or by relations wholly foreign to the subject, by which the attention is bewildered and the interest weakened. I found, indeed, so many minute and unnecessary details, and so much improper and ridiculous description, intermixed with the most pathetic events, that I was some-

times on the point of relinquishing my undertaking.

Yet it occurred to me, that the reason which made the work difficult and unpleasant for me to write, would render it, when finished, a desirable book to those who may wish to obtain some idea of a celebrated publication, without wading thro' the obscurities and extraneous matter of M. de Pitaval.

In the course of my work, I met with a new edition of my original, by M. Richer. This gentleman tells his reader, that he has elucidated the difficulties and obscurities

obscurities of his predecessor; and I hoped to receive great assistance from his labours: but I cannot say the production of M. Richer entirely answers the promises of his preface. The style is certainly clearer, and the narrative more distinct, but it is also less interesting; and in some instances he sets forth the circumstances, and even the catastrophe, in a light very different from that in which they are placed by M. de Pitaval. I have, however, let the facts remain as related by him from whom I happened to select them, mentioning only, at the end of each story, the author I have followed.

It is probable, that some of these striking stories may have already found their way to the English press ; but, as I have been myself unable to find any preceding translation of those I had selected, I may presume that, with most English readers, my work will have the attraction of novelty.

I am aware, indeed, that it is a kind of work from which little fame can arise to its author ; but I have not the false pride and delicacy to wish, that my reader should suppose me uninfluenced by humbler motives to publication.

My

My ambition will be satisfied, if a number of candid readers allow, that, by dint of some irksome labour, I have produced a little compilation, not inelegant in its style; and, in the matter it contains, both interesting and instructive.

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

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sia con il doppio tasse a lire
- dieci lire e mezzo per lire
a tempo di due mesi. I quodat sono
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T H E

MARCHIONESS DE GANGE.

IT has been asserted, that there is in human nature a propensity to every kind of evil; and that persons of the best disposition, and most liberal education, may find themselves in such situations as will, if their passions are suffered to predominate, betray them into the most frightful excesses, into crimes which cannot be related without horror.

Under the dominion of such dreadful passions the Abbé and the Cheva-

lier de Gange must have been, when they committed the inhuman cruelties which are the subject of the following narrative.

The unfortunate victim of their malice and inhumanity, was the only daughter of the Sieur de Rousson of Avignon; and tho' her birth was not noble, the splendid fortune she was to inherit from the Sieur de Nocheres, her maternal grandfather, made her to be considered as a desirable match by the first nobility in the province.—Mademoiselle de Chateaublanc (as she was called before her marriage), was not only a rich heiress, but one of the loveliest women in France; and the description that remains of her person, which paints her as possessed of almost every perfection that adorns the female form, corresponds with the miniature

nature which is extant of her, drawn by Mignard, and allowed to be one of his most exquisite performances.

With so much personal beauty, with a soft and compassionate heart, sense rather solid than lively, a temper serene and gentle, and manners calculated to adorn and enjoy society, she was married, at the age of thirteen, to the Marquis de Castillane, grandson of the Duke de Villars. This young man was of an illustrious family, handsome and well made, and had received an excellent education, which heightened the good qualities he inherited from nature.

They were married in the year 1649, and the Marquis soon afterwards carried his wife to court, where such a blazing star could not appear without attracting universal admiration.

tion.—She was immediately acknowledged the reigning beauty of the season, and that gay and gallant monarch Louis the fourteenth, was himself sensible of her uncommon attractions—admiration of so flattering a nature as would have intoxicated any other young person.—At some of those magnificent spectacles that were then given at court, the King chose Madame de Castillane for his partner in dancing—where her elegant dress, which was most fortunately chosen, and the grace with which she performed, gave new lustre to her charming face and figure.—She was less known at court by the name of the Marchioness de Castillane than by that of the beautiful Provençal.

In the midst of this dissipated circle,
so dangerous to a very young person,
the

the fair Madame de Castillane continued perfectly to possess her reason; and to those with whom she was intimate declared, that she felt the emptiness and fallacy of the pleasures with which she was surrounded, and that they afforded her no real satisfaction.— It is not to be supposed, however, that envy would wholly spare a woman so universally admired. Some adventures of gallantry were attributed to her, which those who knew her best, declared to be totally void of foundation; and, as no better proof was ever offered of their reality than the scandal of the day, it is probable they were the inventions of malice and disappointment, always ready to raise, against superior excellence, reports, which idleness and folly are as ready to propagate.

Surrounded with gayeties and lux-

B 3 uries;

uries ; admired by those who saw her, beloved by those who knew her, Madame de Castillane continued some time at court. And there she heard the melancholy account of the loss of the galley in which her husband some short time before had embarked, who, being overtaken by a storm on the coast of Sicily, perished, together with all who were on board.—Sincerely afflicted at his death, she retired to the house of a friend, Madame d'Ampus, till the regulation of her affairs obliged her to return to Avignon.

When she arrived at her native place, neither the pleasures of liberty, which she might now enjoy, being a widow in the earliest bloom of youth, nor the effect that her charms (which received new splendour from the dark contrast of her weeds) had on all who beheld her, could engage her to continue

tinue in the world—and she retired for a considerable time to a convent, where she permitted none to see her but her particular friends, or such as had business with her relative to her estate.

But as soon as the severe confinement to which she thought it right to conform, during the first year of her widowhood, began to relax, thro' the solicitation of her friends, a croud of lovers surrounded her—and among the most conspicuous, was the young Marquis de Gange. His person was not less a model of manly beauty, than that of the Marchioness de Castillane for female grace and loveliness. His fortune was perfectly suitable, and his rank illustrious, being Baron de Languedoc, Marquis de Gange, and Governor of St. André.—His manners were extremely engaging, and

his age did not much exceed twenty—and so well did the exterior qualities of these young persons appear to correspond, that it struck all who knew them, that they were designed by Heaven for each other.—Madame de Castillane, insensible of every other passion, soon felt and returned that of Monsieur de Gange. This second marriage took place in 1658, and the world applauded a union, which seemed so likely to secure the happiness of both parties. But however in outward advantages they appeared to agree, their souls were very different. Proud, fierce, capricious, obstinate, and gloomy, how little the Marquis de Gange resembled her, with whom his destiny was united! For some time, however, after their marriage, he concealed, under the fond attentions of the

the Lover and the Bridegroom, that unhappy temper, and those unpleasant manners, that afterwards appeared in the Husband—and the beautiful Marchioness, who was herself all truth and mildness, never suspected him to be otherwise than he then appeared.— Alas ! to these halcyon days succeeded others, in which the ardour of his passion being abated, he no longer thought it worth his while to disguise his disposition. Ennui and disgust insensibly took possession of the Marquis, who began to mix again with the societies he had quitted on his marriage—and the Marchioness, being left to follow her own amusements, returned to be again the admiration of the crowds she had deserted for him ; but it was merely for amusement she did so ; and not with any design of engaging in affairs of gallantry.

— She

—She never seriously listened to any of her admirers; but, as soon as she perceived an attachment forming, that was likely to create any real uneasiness, she either wholly excluded such pretenders from her society; or, if she admitted them to it, received them with so much coolness, that the vainest among them soon found they had nothing to hope.—But though her conduct was perfectly innocent, the Marquis (consciclus perhaps of the inequality of their minds) beheld it with jealousy and mistrust.—His temper, naturally morose and vindictive, was much disposed to suspicion; and his humour became every day more teasing and disagreeable to his wife—Yet, as a jealous husband is in France an object of ridicule, and as he could find nothing in the conduct of Madame de

Gange,

Gange, on which to found any real complaint, he constrained himself as much as he could, and suffered the uneasiness of his mind to appear only in the invincible ill temper with which he received his wife—by which, if she had really had the inclinations he suspected her of, he would only have accelerated the evil he so greatly dreaded. Such was his situation of mind, when his two brothers, the Abbé and the Chevalier de Gange, came to reside at his house. The elder of them, who was called the Abbé de Gange, possessed an uncommon share of understanding, with the malice and cunning of a fiend.—Violent, proud, and ambitious, he studied to govern every one about him ; in which, from his superior abilities, he usually succeeded too well.—Having neither principles
of

of honour or sentiments of humanity, no considerations, no laws, either divine or human, could prevent his carrying any point, on which he had once resolved. Yet this diabolical spirit he had art enough to conceal, with the profoundest dissimulation, and could assume the appearance of the most amiable, benevolent, and honest man in the world, while his heart was the receptacle of every vice that disgraces human nature.—He was not in orders, but took the equivocal title of Abbé, as being the most favourable to the indulgence of his licentious passions.—The Chevalier, whose understanding was below mediocrity, seemed born only to be directed by others; and the Abbé, without his perceiving it, governed him entirely.—Over the Marquis also the Abbé acquired the
same

same ascendancy. His estate and his family were soon given up to the management of this assiduous brother ; who left him the name of master, but enjoyed all the power. The uncommon charms of the Marchioness de Gange made an immediate and deep impression on the heart of this bad man, nor did the consideration of her being his brother's wife deter him a moment from forming designs upon her honour. Scorning to put any restraint on his inclinations, however unwarrantable, he determined to attempt seducing Madame de Gange ; and for this purpose, knowing the influence of gratitude on such a heart as hers, he began by endeavouring to oblige her. He saw how uneasily she lived with his brother, who fatigued her incessantly with jealousy and ill-humour

mour—and the first use he made of his power over the Marquis was, to induce him to alter his conduct towards his wife: of whom the Abbé spoke so advantageously, that his jealousy began to give place to those sentiments of esteem and tenderness which he had at first felt for her.—The Marchioness, sensible of this change in her husband's behaviour, gave way to the natural goodness and sweetness of her disposition, and forgot the harsh treatment she had lately suffered; treatment which was on the point of changing her former attachment into a settled coldness, if not aversion. The Abbé, however, did not intend that Madame de Gange should enjoy the satisfaction she received from her husband's returning affection, without knowing to whom she owed it.—As soon as an opportunity

opportunity offered, he took care to tell her, that the Marquis's present attention, and kindness, was in consequence of what he had said in her favour—and he gave her at the same time to understand, that the heart of his brother was so entirely in his hands, that her treatment must depend wholly on him.—Disgusted at such a declaration, the Marchioness answered coolly, that she thanked him. — The Abbé was a good deal disappointed at the reception she gave him on this occasion.—He had flattered himself that she would have accepted with more vivacity his proffered services, and that, by first engaging her gratitude, he should in time create in her breast warmer sentiments in his favour.—But though a man of abilities, such as he possest, who determines to make himself agreeable,

able, and has such continual opportunities of doing so, is above all others the most dangerous object a young woman can encounter; it happened that the dislike, even bordering on antipathy, which Madame de Gange had conceived, on the first sight of the Abbé, was an invincible obstacle to his designs.—Her manner towards him was civil, but so cold and distant, that he could very seldom find an occasion to speak to her apart.—And after some time, as he saw she studied to avoid him, and that all his assiduities made no impression on her, he determined to speak plainly, and to acknowledge his passion, in terms that she could not misunderstand.

The Marchioness had engaged herself to pass some days at the country residence of a friend.—Thither the Abbé

Abbé followed her, and, as his conversation was extremely agreeable, he was received with pleasure by the whole party.—He was usually the life of whatever company he was in, and now he exerted himself to the utmost, and was more brilliant and entertaining than ever. A hunting party being proposed, at which every gentleman was to attend on a lady, the Abbé offered himself to escort Madame de Gange; which she accepted, with her usual cool civility, as a matter of perfect indifference.—As soon as the company began to disperse in the woods, the Abbé, who now saw the opportunity at hand that he had so long wished for, led Madame de Gange into the most unfrequented spot he could find, and then, with very little preface, made the confession he had meditated—but so a-

bruptly, and with expressions so strong and ardent, that they inspired Madame de Gange with terror rather than pity — who turning pale with surprise and anger, could not immediately form any reply; while the Abbé continued to declare himself with such violence of manner, and in terms so unequivocal, that she could not doubt of his being very much in earnest—and she saw, that to endeavour to laugh it off, as she would have done such a declaration from a less resolute lover, would have availed her nothing: assuming therefore an air more reserved than before, she said—“ I will not, Monsieur l’Abbé, affect to misunderstand you;—but you must know how I ought to receive such a confession as you have presumed to make. Ask your own heart, Sir, ask your

“ your own conscience, what decency
“ and duty should urge me to say to
“ you—and spare me the pain of hold-
“ ing a farther conversation on so odi-
“ ous a subject.” — The manner in
which she pronounced these words,
made them infinitely more mortifying
to the Abbé, than the words them-
selves. Stung to the soul, his dissimu-
lation entirely forsook him, and he
fiercely answered—“ Know you not,
“ Madam, when you brave my ven-
“ geance thus, that your fate is en-
“ tirely in my hands? — Have you
“ forgotten that it is in *my* power to
“ make you the most miserable of wo-
“ men—and that I will do so if you
“ refuse to listen to me? In declining
“ to return my passion, you risk hav-
“ ing your life embittered by the se-
“ verest trials. Love me, Madam, suf-

“ fer me at least to hope that you will,
“ and all my power shall be dedicated
“ to your happiness and tranquillity.”

—The Marchioness, still making an effort to command her indignation, replied—“ As you affect to love, learn now to esteem me.—Be assured, Monsieur l’Abbé, that the dread of evils worse than death, shall never induce me to commit a wicked action.”—“ But,” added she, as if to mortify him still more—“ if I were indeed capable of such weakness, you are the last man on earth who could influence me to be guilty of it.” So saying, she rejoined her company, leaving the Abbé overwhelmed with rage and confusion. — His pride so severely humbled, his love hopeless, irritated him almost to madness ; and, incapable with all his art of commanding his temper,

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while his heart was corroded by such uneasy sensations, he took a full leave of the lady of the house, and returned in the evening to Avignon—nobody but Madame de Gange being able to guess the cause of this sudden access of ill-humour, which all his complaisance and dissimulation did not enable him a moment to disguise.

While the Abbé became every day more odious in the eyes of Madame de Gange, and while she carefully avoided any other communication with him, than the most distant politeness required, her husband's younger brother, the Chevalier, appeared to her in a very different light. Without possessing an understanding equal to either of the others, his manners were softer, and his temper seemed more equal and amiable; and though Madame de

Gange felt no other sentiments for him than those of friendship, which their alliance authorised, yet she grew insensibly fond of his company, and found great relief in opening her heart freely to him, on all her domestic uneasiness; while the comparison she could not avoid making, between his gentle attentions and the turbulent and importunate passion with which the Abbé had dared to trouble her, never failed to be greatly in his favour.—But unhappily the Chevalier, equally susceptible of the power of beauty, could not be continually with her, and receive marks of her esteem, without feeling the same passion rising in his bosom.—The regard she testified for him on all occasions, and the pleasure she took in his society, inspired him with hopes, that she was very far from meaning to give.

give.—The Abbé soon saw the situation of his brother's heart, and saw it with inexpressible rage and anguish.

—He determined to watch them narrowly; but having done so for some time, all his malice did not enable him to discover any one circumstance, that was at all inconsistent with the purest virtue, on the part of Madame de Gange. Though he was irritated to distraction, by the partiality she so avowedly shewed the Chevalier, yet he wished to try whether it was to him only that her virtue was impregnable; and he determined to speak to the Chevalier, and to engage him to push his good fortune to the utmost.—For this purpose, he took the first opportunity of their being alone, to say to him —“ Brother, we are both in love with “ the Marchioness; if you can make

C 4 “ your-

“ yourself acceptable, I will withdraw
“ my pretensions, and shall be satisfied
“ to rejoice in your happiness; but if
“ you fail, I expect you will have the
“ generosity to acknowledge it, and
“ give me leave, in my turn, to try
“ my fortune.—I trust that we are so
“ much united, that we shall not be
“ embroiled about a woman.”—The
Chevalier, who was a dupe to this pre-
tended generosity, protested, that, ra-
ther than give his brother the Abbé any
uneasiness, he would endeavour to con-
quer his passion. “ No,” said the
Abbé, “ if I see you happy, I shall
“ be content. My friendship is yet
“ dearer to me than my love.” They
embraced on the strength of this con-
vention, and the Chevalier agreed im-
mediately to open the siege. In con-
sequence of which, though he never
had

had the courage to declare himself in such direct terms as the Abbé had done, he threw so much passion into his eyes and manner, and redoubled his affiduities and attentions in a way so much warmer than mere brotherly sentiments would have inspired, that Madame de Gange could not mistake their source ; and soon found it necessary to avoid his company, as much as she had till then sought it. But as she perceived, that this alteration in her conduct, marked as it was, did not sufficiently discourage him, she sometimes mingled in her conversation the most poignant raillery, on the mistakes the Chevalier often made in company : and though she was naturally very candid, and wished to palliate or conceal such errors, she made use of this method to let the Chevalier see how contemptible

he

he appeared to her, and by that means to deprive him of all the hopes her kindness had made him entertain; and perhaps to this severity she owed the cruel revenge he harboured against her, since nothing is so likely to pique such a man, and to irritate him beyond forgiveness, as to let him see he is contemned and despised, for weakness of which he is conscious. Certain it is, that the Chevalier was, by this means, not only cured of his presumption, but his love for his sister-in-law was changed into the bitterest and most inveterate hatred.

As soon as the Chevalier acknowledged that he gave up the pursuit as hopeless, the Abbé returned to the charge. He found that cementing the union between his brother, the Marquis, and Madame, had procured him none of the advantages he expected from

from the gratitude of the latter, and he determined to try the effect of an opposite conduct, and to inspire the Marquis with jealousy, to which he was naturally inclined. For this purpose he affected to remark, that Madame de Gange had lately taken particular delight in associating with a certain party, among whom was a young man of a most engaging person and manners; and in fact, Madame de Gange was fond of his society, and frequently conversed with him, but always in company with people of rank and reputation, and with that purity of heart, which, feeling itself incapable of ill, never imagines it can be suspected of it. Such an object, however, as this young man, was exactly fitted to promote the designs of the Abbé; and he represented her partiality in such a light

light to the Marquis, that he became inflamed with the most furious jealousy, and, forgetting the common forms of decency, he not only perpetually insulted his wife with language the most affronting and injurious, but proceeded to greater enormities ; while the Abbé, continually pouring oil on the flame, the situation of the unhappy Madame de Gange became every day more insupportable. But she made no attempt to undeceive her husband, as to the motive of her brother's conduct, foreseeing, that whatever she could say would be totally fruitless.

The Abbé having suffered her to continue for some time under the sufferings he had himself occasioned, determined again to attempt moving her in favour of himself. She so cautiously avoided any interview with him,

him, that it was not without great difficulty he found an opportunity of speaking to her alone. At length he contrived to join her in the garden. " Well, Madam," said he, attempting to take her hand—" are we always " to be enemies ? Why do you oblige " me to make you unhappy, when " you know I would sacrifice my " life to your satisfaction. By what " you have lately experienced, you " find I did not exaggerate my power, " when I told you it depended on me, " to make you the most unhappy of " women : and you know that you " may, on certain terms, engage me " to use that power only to contri- " bute to your felicity."—Madame de Gange heard him without interruption ; and, as soon as he had concluded his harangue, she cast on him

a look

a look expressive of the most profound contempt, and walked from him, without deigning to reply ; leaving the Abbé more enraged and mortified than before.

It was about this time that the Marchioness de Gange, and several persons who were with her, eat of some cream in which arsenic had been infused, but in so small quantity, that the oily nature of the vehicle, in which it was administered, prevented its having the ill effect that had been intended. On this occasion, a prediction, that had been made to her some years before, at Paris, returned to her remembrance : — an astrologer, whom it was the fashion to consult, assured her she would die a violent death ; and though she had too much sense to give much credit to the vain and fallacious science of divination, she could not, on

this

this event, forbear speaking of the prediction that had been made. The affair of the poisoned cream made for some time a great noise at Avignon ; but, as the Marchioness was the first to forbear speaking of it, it was soon forgotten, like all other wonders of the day. — Soon after this, her grandfather, the Sieur de Nocheres, died, and she came into possession of a very large fortune, which he left to her sole use and disposal. The Marquis now thought it necessary again to alter his behaviour, and to treat with respect a woman who had so much in her power. The Abbé was the forwardest to advise him to assume the semblance of his former affection, since he saw that he could himself gain nothing, but that his family might lose a great deal by contrary behaviour. As to

the Chevalier, he was a mere cypher, whom the Abbé directed as he pleased. But the change was too great, at this time, to deceive Madame de Gange. Whatever their professions were, she believed their hearts were still the same, and that their present complaisance she owed entirely to her acquisition of fortune, and her power of disposing of it. As the affairs of this wealthy succession were likely to occupy a great deal of their time, and to prevent their going to Gange so much as they used to do, the Marquis designed passing some months there, in order to regulate the business of that estate, that no inconvenience might arise from his future absence. He proposed to the Marchioness to accompany him thither; to which, with her usual sweetnes, she consented, though

though she had a decided and invincible antipathy to the place. On this occasion she felt a particular repugnancy, and presentiments of such melancholy import, as determined her before she went to make a will, by which she declared Madame de Rouffan, her mother, her sole heir, for life, to all her fortune, with liberty to give it, at her death, to either of the children which she (the Marchioness de Gange) had by the Marquis. One was a son, then about six years old; and the other a daughter, about five: and mistrusting, perhaps, her own firmness, she went before a magistrate at Avignon, and declared that the testament she signed in his presence was her real meaning, and that any subsequent one should be considered as extorted from her, and be of no effect; and

she signed a declaration to that purpose, as strong as could be drawn up. It was easy to see, from the purport of this will, that the treatment she had received from the Marquis had made a deep impression on her heart, for his name was not mentioned. As soon as she had confirmed this disposition of her effects, by the most authentic and certain precautions, she prepared for her journey to the Chateau de Gange, though with so strong a persuasion that she should return no more, that she took a solemn and affecting farewell of all her friends, who, with tears, heard her express the unaccountable prejudice she had conceived, that she was bidding them an eternal adieu !

Under the same mournful idea, she distributed several sums of money among the convents at Avignon ; particularly,

ticularly, she gave a sum to the Recollects, beseeching them to say mass for her, and to pray that she might not die without receiving the holy sacraments; and so earnestly did she recommend herself to their prayers, that she seemed convinced her death was inevitable.

What shall we say to these presentiments, so frequent in history? how account for the unseen hand, which, while it warns the victims of their fate, seems to take from them, the power of avoiding it? * Under such impressions, however, Madame de Gange began her journey to the

* Such was the conviction of his death that haunted Henry the 4th, before he was assassinat-ed by Ravaillac—Such the strange signs that preceded the death of the Duke of Guise, at Blois; and innumerable others, related in the histories of all nations.

Chateau; de Gange situated nineteen leagues from Avignon; where, on her arrival, she was received by the Dowager Marchioness de Gange, the Marquis's mother, with every demonstration of esteem and affection. This lady, who was of a character uncommonly amiable, and had a very superior understanding, was charmed with her daughter-in-law, and on this and every other occasion had behaved to her with the greatest politeness and regard. Her usual residence was at Montpellier, but she now came to pass some time with her son, and endeavoured to contribute, as much as possible, to make her residence at Gange agreeable to the young Marchioness. The Marquis himself, as well as the Abbé and the Chevalier, seemed also to strive, by their present kindness and attention,

tion, to make her forget every impropriety in their former behaviour, and left nothing undone that they thought would convince her that their hearts were entirely changed.— The most insinuating manners, the most delicate attentions, were employed to persuade Madame de Gange of their sincerity ; and the Abbé and Chevalier, as if convinced that their presumptuous attachment had justly incurred the displeasure of the Marchioness, now appeared no longer as importunate lovers, but as tender friends ; and they assumed this character with so much ease, that she, who was the most candid and sincere of women, forgot insensibly the dislike she had conceived, and lived with them on a footing of unreserved friendship and intimacy ; flattering herself that her

38 THE MARCHIONESS

future life would be tranquil, and even happy. After the whole family had continued together for some time, the Dowager Madame de Gange returned to Montpellier, and the Marquis said he was obliged by business to return to Avignon. But before he went, there is reason to believe he held a long consultation with his brothers; which contributed but too much to the tragical event that so soon followed his departure.

The Dowager Marchioness and her eldest son being gone, Madame de Gange found herself alone with two persons who were in fact her greatest enemies, but who hid their enmity under such refined hypocrisy, that she not only believed them entirely cured of their former dishonourable thoughts of her, but that they had

had been converted by her conduct to a just sense of what they owed her and her husband. As soon as the Abbé saw that his dissimulation had on her soft and ingenuous mind all the effect he had hoped for, he contrived, under pretence of consulting only her happiness, to mention to her the will she had made at Avignon, which he besought her to alter, representing to her, that while such a will remained in force, the world, as well as the Marquis her husband, would believe, that she still harboured anger and resentment against him ; and that, as he was determined to live with her for the future in the most perfect harmony, it was her part to convince him, by revoking that will, that she no longer remembered their former disagreements. Madame de Gange, whose

heart was formed for affection and forgiveness, could not resist these reasons; she consented to make a new will, in which she gave every thing to her husband. The Abbé either did not know of the declaration she had signed before a magistrate at Avignon, or did not believe it would invalidate a subsequent act. Certain it is, that he did not ask her to revoke that act; but having, as he thought, secured her property to his family, he prepared to execute the infamous design he had formed; and, by his influence with the infatuated Chevalier, he forced him to enter into all his views, and even to keep pace with him in the most atrocious crimes.—Some time in May, 1667, Madame de Gange, being slightly indisposed, sent to the apothecary of the place for a medicine

cine she had occasion to take ; but when it came, it was so black and thick, that she found her aversion to it invincible, and refused to swallow it. She contented herself with taking some pills she had by her. It is more than probable, that the Abbé and the Chevalier had mixed poison in this medicine ; for, as they did not know, for some hours, that the Marchioness had not taken it, they sent in the course of the morning several times, to the door of her chamber, to enquire how she did ; undoubtedly expecting, with impatience, to hear, that the potion had the effect they intended ; but being undeceived, as to her having drank it, they formed the diabolical resolution of destroying, at all events, the unfortunate object of their malignity.

Madame

Madame de Gange, who found it necessary to keep her bed all day, invited several ladies of the neighbourhood to come and pass the afternoon with her, and, though she was not quite well, she never appeared more interesting or entertaining. The Abbé and the Chevalier, who were admitted to join the party, seemed unusually absent and melancholy, particularly the Chevalier, whom the Marchioness laughingly attacked on his absence of mind, and at length obliged him to return her raillery. The Abbé, though he also seemed much more reserved than usual, failed not to enliven the conversation by some of those agreeable fallies, for which he was so remarkable. But still there was in the behaviour of them both, something that the company remarked as extraordinary.

ordinary. Neither of them partook of a collation that was served up to the ladies, of which Madame de Gange not only did the honours with her usual graceful ease, but also ate heartily. When it was over, the ladies took their leave; the Abbé attended them to the door, but the Chevalier remained sitting by the bed side, buried in thought, and with a countenance so gloomy, as very much puzzled the Marchioness, who knew not how to account for it. The dreadful mystery was soon cleared up, on the return of the Abbé into the room. She saw him enter in about ten minutes, holding in one hand a pistol, and in the other a glass filled with a black liquid. Fury and distraction was in his eyes; his hair seemed bristled on his head, and his features were convulsed with passion.

sion. No description can do justice to the terror his whole figure inspired. He fastened the door, and advancing some paces towards the bed where the affrighted Marchioness lay, he stopped as if to contemplate his victim, and, fixing on her his glaring eyes, which seemed forced out of their sockets by the rage that possessed him, he continued for above a minute to stand staring on her with a petrifying look, as if to announce to her all the horrors of her fate!—On the other side of her appeared the Chevalier; his countenance as expressive of the rage that consumed him, as was his brother's, but the expression was different, and when he drew his sword, some faint hope arose in the Marchioness, that he drew it to defend her; but she did not long continue in that error. These two wretches,

with

with the hearts and intentions of demons, came close to her bed, and the Abbé, with a hollow, but determined voice, said, — “ Now, Madam, “ you are to die—chuse whether it shall “ be by sword, or pistol, or poison.” — “ To die!” exclaimed Madame de “ Gange — Good God! what have I “ done? how have I deserved this excess “ of cruelty? and why are you to be my “ judge and executioner?” — Finding that remonstrance seemed to aggravate his fury, she addressed herself to the Chevalier and, turning on him her lovely eyes, she cried—“ Ah! my dear “ brother, are you too armed against “ me? is it possible that you can have “ the heart to become my murderer? “ and does all my kindness and regard “ for you deserve no other return?”
(She had often lent him sums of money
of

of her own, and only a few days before given him a draught for five hundred livres). But far from being softened by this pathetic address, it seemed to redouble his rage against her, and, with a countenance and voice yet more terrible, he cried, “ Our resolution is taken, Madam — you must die — chuse therefore the means, for we can hesitate no longer.” — If the fact were not well authenticated, it could not be believed that two young men, on whom the beauty of Madame de Gange had had such an effect, should now harden their hearts against her, pleading with all that beauty, and with the most moving remonstrances, for her life, and determine to dip their hands in her blood: but so it was! — and, while the Abbé held the pistol to her head, and the Chevalier his sword to her heart,

heart, she took out of the Abbé's other hand the poison, and, finding there was no remedy, swallowed it. The nature of it was so corrosive, that some of it falling on her breast turned the skin quite black, and her lips were also burnt and parched by drinking it. Not content with having made her swallow the liquid, the Chevalier took a silver bodkin, and collecting the dregs, that remained on the sides and at the bottom of the glass, he put them on its edge, and insisted on her swallowing that also, using expressions of indecency and brutality that embittered his cruelty. The unhappy Marchioness obeyed; but though she took this last destructive mixture into her mouth, she did not swallow it, but held it there till she had an opportunity, unperceived, to conceal it in the bed-cloaths.

But,

But, as she had now swallowed more than enough to destroy her, she exclaimed, in a voice of the most piercing anguish, “ My death is now inevitable ; in the name of God then, I implore you to have mercy on my soul ! — do not deprive me of my existence here and hereafter, but send me a confessor, that I may die like a Christian.” They then went out, carefully securing the door after them ; and, seeking the priest of the parish, who was entirely devoted to them, ordered him to go and confess Madame de Gange. It is astonishing, that, in the midst of such a complication of horrors, Madame de Gange still possessed herself, that her presence of mind did not for a moment forsake her, and that her resolution and recollection enabled her to make strong efforts.

efforts (alas how fruitlessly !) to preserve her life. No sooner had the inhuman brothers shut the door, than she determined to attempt her escape ; and putting on a taffeta petticoat, the only garment she had at hand, she ran to the window of her chamber, which looked into the court-yard of the castle, to throw herself out of it, though it was twenty - two feet from the ground. At the instant that she was about to precipitate herself from this height, the priest opened the door of her room, and seeing what she was going to do, endeavoured to prevent her. Had she thrown herself directly down, she would probably have dashed her head or her breast against the stones, but he snatched at her petticoat, and caught it with such force,

that a piece of it remained in his hand ; and the turn this gave to her whole body, so broke her fall, that she came to the ground with her feet first, which were terribly cut by the stones. The wicked priest, who was entirely devoted to the service of the Abbé and the Chevalier, seeing she had reached the ground without being materially hurt, threw on her a very heavy pitcher of water, which stood in the window next to that from whence she had jumped ; and which, if it had fallen on her head, must have certainly killed her ; but it fell within two or three inches of her. The first thought that occurred to her, as soon as she reached the ground, was to endeavour to discharge the poison that she had swallowed : for this purpose she took

took one of the tresses of her long hair, and put it as far as she could down her throat: the expedient succeeded, and she brought up the noxious mixture, together with what she had eaten, and then attempted to make her way out of the inclosure where she was; but every door was fastened. She then went towards the stables; they were shut also; and she now despaired of escaping before her cruel assassins could reach her. At length she saw a groom
“ — Oh friend!” cried she, “ save
“ my life — I am poisoned — let me
“ go through the stables, that I may
“ receive help before it is too late.”
The man, moved by her situation, took her in his arms, and carried her through his stables into the road, where he put her under the care of some women who were passing by.

The priest, in the mean time, hastened to the Abbé and the Chevalier, to inform them of her escape ; and they resolved not to leave their work imperfect. While she ran wildly along, imploring succour from every one she met, they pursued her, crying out that she was delirious in a fever, and had escaped from her attendants. The people, who beheld her almost without cloaths, her feet naked and bleeding, her hair dishevelled, and running along she knew not where, were easily persuaded that she was indeed out of her sences. At length, as she reached the door of the Sieur des Prats, about three hundred yards from the Chateau, the Chevalier overtook her ; and forcing her into the house with him, shut the door, while the Abbé remained on the outside with a pistol

pistol in his hand, protesting that he would kill the first person that offered to approach, for that he would not suffer his sister-in-law, in the situation she then was, to become a spectacle to strangers. His real design was to prevent her receiving any assistance that might counteract the effect of the poison.. The Sieur des Prats was absent, but his wife was at home, in company with several friends: among these ladies, the unfortunate Marchioness wildly rushed, beseeching them to save her, and exclaiming that she had just been poisoned. The Chevalier protested to them, that she was merely delirious; but while he traversed the room in great agitation, these women crowded round her, and, as she still continued to cry out, “ I am “ poisoned, I am poisoned !” one

of them gave her a box of Orvietan, a counter poison, of which she swallowed several pieces; and another presented her with a glass of water; but so great was the inhumanity of the Chevalier, that, just as she was raising it to her burning lips, he dashed it out of her hand, and, addressing himself to the ladies, besought them not to attend to the incoherent ravings of Madame de Gange; adding, that he should be obliged to them, if they would leave her wholly to his care, as she was unfit, in her present situation, to be with any but her own family. The Marchioness now conceived a hope of being able to prevail on the Chevalier to have mercy on her, and, in that hope, she desired to be left alone a moment with him: the ladies at her request retired to another room; and then Madame de Gange, throw-

ing

ing herself on her knees before the Chevalier, cried—“ My dear brother,
“ will nothing prevail on you to re-
“ yoke the cruel vow you have made
“ to destroy me ? will nothing excite
“ your pity ? Suppose I were an un-
“ happy stranger, who reduced to the
“ most dreadful extremity came to
“ implore your pity ! — you would
“ surely, as a gentleman, as a man, de-
“ fend and protect such a stranger ; and
“ is your heart shut only against me ?
“ I will engage, by the most solemn
“ oath, to represent what has hitherto
“ happened just as you will dictate—
“ I will forget it — and, if I have de-
“ served your hatred by the least in-
“ jury, I will submit to any acknow-
“ ledgement, any punishment you
“ please. But in God’s name, my
“ dear brother, have compassion on

“ me ! — pity me, my dear brother,
“ pity me ! and do not precipitate a
“ death, which is perhaps already in-
“ evitable.” This supplication, en-
forced with all the touching energy of
despair, all the persuasive eloquence of
beauty, only irritated the cruelty of
the monster to whom it was addressed :
he took a short sword which he wore,
and, using it as a dagger, stabbed the
Marchioness twice with it in her
breast. She flew from him, and called
for help : he pursued her, and gave
her five other blows on the back ; and
having snapped his sword, left the
broken end in her shoulder. As he
now thought he had concluded this
bloody scene, he quitted the room,
and going hastily to the door, he said
to the Abbé, who was waiting there,
“ Come Abbé, we must be gone,
“ the

“the business is done.”—By this time the ladies were returned to the room where Madame de Gange lay weltering in her blood, and, to all appearance, breathing her last. Her blood ran from her in streams; her respiration was short and laborious; but, as she was not actually dead, they thought it possible yet to assist her; and one of them went to the window, and called out for a surgeon to be immediately sent for.

— On hearing which, the Abbé found their work was yet incomplete: whereupon, he rushed like a demoniac into the room, and, approaching the dying victim on the floor, snapped his pistol close to her breast; but it missed fire; and at the same instant Madame de Brunel, one of the ladies present, seized his arm and turned the pistol aside. The enraged Abbé, seeing this

blow

blow which he thought so effectual defeated, gave Madame Brunel a violent stroke with his fist, and then attempted to stun the Marchioness with the end of his pistol; but the women now all pressed round him, overwhelmed him with blows, and driving him in spite of all his efforts to the door, they thrust him out and shut it upon him. They then returned to the unhappy lady; and one of them, who knew something of surgery, staunched the blood, and took from her shoulder the end of the sword, encouraged by Madame de Gange herself, who, weak and fainting as she was, besought her to put her knee against her shoulder to force out the broken weapon. By this time a surgeon arrived, who dressed her wounds, none of which he thought would be fatal;

the

the Chevalier, in his confusion, not having struck her where his blows would have been mortal. She was put to bed, and hopes were entertained that she might yet survive. In the mean time the two assassins, taking advantage of the night, fled from the scene of their cruelty. It was nine o'clock in the evening when they set out together for Aberas, another estate of the Marquis's about a league from Gange. There they remained some time, considering what they should next do; and the reproaches they made each other, for not having compleated their infamous undertaking, rose at length to such a height, that they were ready to draw their swords on each other. They talked of returning to Gange, there to finish their sacrifice; but they recollect ed it was improbable
they

they should gain access to her; that they should certainly be taken; and that therefore it was wiser to consult their own safety. —

The horrid event was soon spread throughout the country. All the neighbouring nobility came to offer their services to Madame de Gange, and the consuls of the district waited on her to offer her a guard, which she accepted, and which was placed round the house of the Sieur des Prats, where she remained. The Baron de Treffan, Grand Provost, endeavoured to overtake the assassins, but they had already reached the coast, and embarked at a port called the Gras de Pataval, near Aqde. A physician and surgeon were sent for from Montpellier to attend the Marchioness, and ever

every possible assistance and convenience provided for her.

The Marquis de Gange was at Avignon when the news of this bloody catastrophe reached him; and though there is little doubt but that he had agreed with his brothers, and even that the design originated with him, yet it is probable that he expected they would have compleated their undertaking by the certain but silent mode of poison, and not in a manner so open and undisguised. As soon as he learned the particulars, he affected the utmost concern and distress, and protested he would revenge the cruel treatment his wife had received from his brothers, by putting them to death with his own hands. In a word, he rather over-acted his part at first, in some respects; for it was remarked

that,

that, instead of setting out immediately for Gange, he deferred his departure for four and twenty hours, though it should seem that not a moment would have been lost by a man who really loved a wife, so situated as was Madame de Gange. It appeared also very extraordinary, that to the friends he saw at Avignon after he received the intelligence, he never mentioned what had happened, though it is so natural for a person under the pressure of a new affliction to speak of it to every body, and to think of nothing else. When the Marquis arrived at Gange, a monk announced his being there to the Marchioness, and she received him with all the tenderness and regard that the most beloved husband could have expected; she only gently reproached him for having

ing left her in the power of his cruel brother. The great judge of hearts, only knows what passed in that of the Marquis. If he was indeed accessory to her murder, which there was great room to believe, this reception, so kind and forgiving, must have been one of the most cruel punishments he could undergo : he had the art, however, to compose his countenance, and not to betray, in his behaviour, the emotions which must have torn his heart with remorse and anguish.

Such was the delicate sensibility of Madame de Gange, that recollecting, after some time, that she had perhaps hurt him by her reproaches in regard to his brother, she apologised to him, and intreated him to impute whatever she had said, not to any want of affection for him, but to the extremity

of

of her sufferings, which extorted such complaints from her; and she held out her hand to him in token of perfect amity, and with a sweetness peculiar to herself. This excess of goodness, which one would imagine must have been a new punishment to the Marquis, only renewed his hopes of availing himself of her affection, to secure the fortune of the dying victim. He desired her to revoke the act, by which she had confirmed her first will made at Avignon; and to confirm that which she had made since at the instigation of the Abbé, which the vice-legate, in consequence of the deed before-mentioned, had refused to register. But she firmly and positively protested against making any alteration: and it is believed, that this attempt of the Marquis's, persuaded her that he had had

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but too great a share in the dreadful resolution of taking away her life, though she did not shew her suspicions by any change in her behaviour.— Certain it is, that those about her, whose notions of the Marquis's guilt were before very strong, were by this ill-timed and improper request confirmed in their evil opinion of him. As he found how fixed Madame de Gange was in her determination, he forbore to renew the discourse, but continued assiduously to attend on her every day, at the house of the Sieur des Prats, where she still remained, not being judged in a situation to reach Montpellier, tho' she earnestly desired it.

Her mother, Madame de Rouffan, and some of her relations from Avignon, arrived at Gange the day after the Marquis. Madame de Rouffan,

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who had no doubt of the Marquis's guilt, was astonished to find him attending on her daughter, and to see them on good terms. Persuaded as she was, that he was the original projector of the infamous scheme to destroy her daughter, she could not with any patience endure to see him with her; her blood seemed to recoil at the sight of him; and, as she was unable to conceal or conquer the aversion she felt for him, she returned in three days to Avignon, notwithstanding all her daughter's endeavours to prevail on her to stay.

Nothing could be more affecting than the pious sentiments of Madame de Gange, who declared, that she sincerely forgave her murderers, and prayed to God to forgive them, and to accept her prayers for their salvation.

As there were sometimes faint hopes of her recovery, but oftener total despair of it, she desired to receive the sacrament. What was her astonishment, when she beheld it presented by Perrette, the same priest who had been employed to assist in her assassination ! Dreading lest, even under the form of the sacred wafer, poison might be again administered, she insisted on the priest's partaking it with her ; he consented; and then in the most solemn manner she called God to witness, while she received the hostie, that she forgave her murderers, and all who had abetted their crime.

It was with perfect indifference she heard those praises of her beauty, which all who now saw her could not help giving it; for never in the most brilliant health, and surrounded with

all the means of happiness, did her charms appear to greater advantage, and never perhaps were they so interesting. Her eyes had sometimes all their dazzling lustre, at others, that soft languor which added to, rather than diminished their attractions. Her complexion retained all its delicacy; and her sentiments and conversation were calculated to inspire all who saw her with regret, that such an assemblage of perfections was sinking into an early grave!

Her son, of whom she was passionately fond, was constantly at her bedside; and as she knew that nothing was so likely to make a deep and indelible impression on his tender mind; as the sight of his dying mother, and hearing the advice she should give, she employed almost all the hours she did

not

not pass in religious exercises, in endeavouring to impress on his memory maxims of charity, piety, and forgiveness, while her own conduct gave the purest example of their practice.— Above all, she sought to call away his thoughts from those ideas of vengeance, which, young as he was, arose in his mind towards the cruel wretches who had destroyed his mother.— The parliament of Toulouse nominated Monsieur de Catalan, counsellor of the Parliament, as a commissioner to interrogate Madame de Gange; he arrived on the third of June, but she was then too ill to see him, however the next day he was admitted to her apartment, and was shut up with her alone for some time, when he forgot nothing that was likely to clear up the horrid story, into which he was

commissioned to enquire. When he had made such notes as he thought proper, she mentioned to him her earnest desire to be removed from Gange, where the dreadful ideas of the scene she had passed through were ever before her eyes, and where she had several reasons to fear for her safety. Monsieur de Catalan assured her, that he would take care she should be removed as soon as possible — but it was too late ; for after passing a night, in which she suffered inexpressible torments, the next day, June the fifth, her complaints seemed to recur with new violence ; and about four o'clock that evening she breathed her last, surrounded by her friends, who were drowned in tears ; and who were so much affected by her death, that for many years afterwards they felt as lively

lively a sorrow whenever it recurred to them, as they did when they saw her expire.

Thus died the Marchioness de Gange, in the noon of life ; whose virtue and beauty made her the pride and glory of her sex. Dreadful, that she should thus fall the victim of avarice and revenge !

On opening her body, it was found that her death had not been occasioned by the wound she received, but by the poison, which had burnt the coats of her stomach, and turned her brain quite black ; such was the corrosive quality of the potion she had swallowed, that though it did not all remain in her stomach, it is astonishing that her constitution could so long resist its effects. But nature, who had adorned her person with so many charms, had

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given her also an excellent habit of body, as if she had meant to have lent long so fair a spectacle to the world. Indeed the length of time she struggled with the deadly consequences of the poison, and her voice and look, which were little impaired, gave hopes, from time to time, she might have recovered. As soon as she was dead, Monsieur de Catalan ordered the Marquis, who was still at Gange, to be arrested. He said that his design was to pursue by law the assassins of his wife; however the magistrate put his seal on the Chateau, and ordered him to be carried to the prison of Montpellier; where though it was night when he arrived, the windows and the streets were filled with spectators, and the populace, who, as well as those of superior rank, were convinced of his guilt,

guilt, received him with groans, hisses, and imprecations.

Madame de Rouffan, the mother of Madame de Gange, took possession of her daughter's estates, and loudly declared her resolution of avenging her death on the Marquis and his execrable brothers. She published a memorial against him, which, as it is only a repetition of the foregoing facts, need not be here noticed—except that in one she accuses the Marquis of having once beat her daughter, and shut her up in a kind of tower for several days, where she was seized with a disorder resembling an apoplexy. The Marquis de Gange gave to this memorial a very short answer, of which this is the sense:—He says, that having the misfortune to have two brothers who have taken away the life of his wife,

wife, of a wife he tenderly loved, he, in completion of his unhappiness, is accused of being one of the accomplices. Overwhelmed and confounded by a destiny so severe, his innocence has not the power to manifest itself; all he can say is, that on supposition only can he be thought guilty, and that much of what has been said against him is founded on calumny. Such is the story of the Marchioness's being poisoned in cream, and of the ill treatment she is supposed to have received. And as to his being a party concerned in her murder, it is founded merely on conjecture, and without any shadow of proof. He therefore appeals to the justice and equity of the judge, against this slight and merely presumptive evidence.

The popular clamour continued
loud

loud against the three brothers; but the judges, after repeated examinations of the Marquis, could find no proof against him, that could justify their condemning him to capital punishment. Yet they could not by any means acquit him. On the 21st of August, they pronounced sentence that the Abbé and the Chevalier de Gange should be broken alive on the wheel; the Marquis degraded from his nobility and banished the kingdom for ever, and his fortune confiscated to the use of the king; and the priest Perrette, after being deprived of the office by the ecclesiastical power, was condemned to the gallies for life.—The ladies of Montpellier, who resented the assassination of Madame de Gange, as if every one of them had lost a sister, murmured extremely at the in-

adequate

adequate punishment of the Marquis; which was perhaps the reason that, some time afterwards, the Marquis de la Douze, accused of poisoning his wife, was condemned to capital punishment, though there was only strong presumptive evidence against him.— Let us now see what became of the murderers; for there is little doubt but that the Marquis may be reckoned among them; since, instead of pursuing his brothers, to revenge the death of his wife, he rejoined them, it should seem, in perfect friendship. He and the Chevalier offered themselves together to serve the republic of Venice, who were then at war with the Turks. The republic accepted their services, and sent them to the island of Archipel (formerly Crete) where they signalized themselves by their courage: till

till the Chevalier was killed by the bursting of a bomb ; and the Marquis survived him only a few days, being blown up by a mine that the besieged sprung in the outworks ; a death too glorious for two wretches stained with so infamous a crime. The priest Perrette was chained to go to the gal- lies, but died on the road.

The history of the Abbé, who was the most atrocious criminal, is longer. He took refuge in Holland, and got by some means or other a recommendation to the Count de la Lippe, sovereign of the Viane, a country two leagues from Utrecht, where he changed his name and embraced the protestant religion. The Count, to whose conversation he was admitted, found his understanding highly culti- vated, and his manners elegant and refined,

refined, which induced him to entrust him with the education of his eldest son, then about nine or ten years old. The Abbé, by the pains he took with his pupil, and the noble sentiments with which he inspired him, made him a most accomplished youth, and gained for himself the esteem of the Count and Countess de la Lippe. He carefully concealed his birth, and suffered it to be believed, that his origin was obscure and mean. He became every day more and more in favour with his patrons; who had such an opinion of his judgment and capacity, that they consulted him on all occasions. It happened that a number of French protestants, who had quitted their country on account of their religion, were desirous about this time of settling in the Viane, and asked permission

mission of the Sieur de la Fare, the chief justice of the country, to build houses there; who told them they must obtain it of the Count de la Lippe, to procure which he advised them to address themselves to their countryman the Sieur de la Martelliere (which was the name the Abbé went by); but he, fearing that if a body of French refugees were suffered to settle there, he should be known either by them or some of their connections, persuaded the Count to refuse his permission; and, in short, he entirely governed the Count and his whole family; yet his heart was a prey to remorse and vexation. Notwithstanding which, he paid his addresses to a young lady nearly related to the Countess, under whose protection she was, and inspired her with a mutual passion; which soon became

came known to the Countess, who, though she had a great regard for de la Martelliere, could by no means think of suffering him to form an alliance with her relation, and therefore told the young lady, that though both the Count and herself highly esteemed de la Martelliere, and meant to reward him generously for his services to their son, yet that they never would hear of her uniting herself with a man of obscure, and perhaps of scandalous birth, and that she must therefore think of it no more. The young lady, however, was not to be intimidated or persuaded; but immediately communicated to her lover the Countess's objection to his birth; which occasioned his taking the most absurd resolution that ever entered the head of a man of sense. He thought that in discover-

ing his real situation, he should remove the obstacle to his wishes ; taking therefore an opportunity of being alone with the Countess, he threw himself at her feet, and told her, that since the supposed obscurity of his birth made him be thought unworthy the honor to which he aspired, he was going to declare to her highness a secret of the utmost importance to his life — that he was not a wandering adventurer of mean origin, but that unhappy Abbé de Gange, whose name was unfortunately but too well known, and whose crime had ever since pursued him with remorse and sorrow. The Countess was so shocked at this declaration, that she flew from him in terror and confusion, and often declared, that every time she thought of the wretch

who dared to make it, her blood ran cold to her heart. Thunder-struck to find that the man to whom they had entrusted the education of their son, was a murderer of the blackest dye, the Count and Countess deliberated, at first, whether they should not seize him, and send him to France, to receive the punishment due to his crimes—he owed his safety, however, to the entreaties of the young prince his pupil, but was ordered instantly to quit the Count's territories, and never again to dare to appear in any part of them.

This order he was forced to obey, and he then went to Amsterdam, where he taught languages some time for his support. The young lady of whom he was enamoured followed him, and was secretly married to him; and

and his pupil, the young Count, generously contributed to their support, till her fortune came into their possession. His good conduct obtained his admission into the Protestant confistory, and he died some time afterwards in that religion, well respected. One of his intimate acquaintance, to whom he had sometimes spoken of his former life, said, that he complained often of horrors of mind, and that he fancied he continually saw before him Madame de Gange, such as she appeared when he stood before her with a pistol in his hand and saw her drink the poison. It is not for us to judge how far his subsequent repentance, and the remorse that pursued him, might expiate his dreadful crime — or what suffering may hereafter be reserved for the horrid monster, who seems to have escaped

84 THE MARCHIONESS DE GANGE.

in this world, the punishment due to
his atrocious villainy !

This is from Guyot de Pitaval's relation. That made by Richer, relates the death of the Marquis de Gange very differently, and says, that he was suffered to return to France, where he resided many years with his son—still detested for the share he was supposed to have in his wife's murder ; and suspected of the most vicious inclinations to the last period of his life.

THE

THE

DESERTED DAUGHTER.

AMONG the many miseries that the unrestrained passions or prejudices of parents bring on their unfortunate offspring, none is more singular, or worthy of compassion, than such as resemble the calamities which the subject of this history sustained.

Joachim Cognot, a physician, residing at Bar sur Seine, married, when in his sixtieth year, Mary Nassier, a woman of reputable parents, then about twenty-nine years old. They had several children, who all died very soon after their birth, except Claude

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Cognot,

Cognot, who was the last born before a temporary separation of the parents. Doctor Cognot, supposing he should find more business at Fontenay, in Poitou, removed thither, as it should seem, to try his success, and did not, from considerations of prudence, remove his family till he saw a probability of his expectations being answered. He continued there near twelve months, and then, finding his progress proportioned to his hopes, he sent for his wife, whom he had not seen during his residence at Fontenay. Seven months after Madame Cognot rejoined her husband, she was delivered of a daughter, who is the subject of this history.

The Doctor, already disposed to suspect his wife's fidelity, and perhaps having heard something of her conduct, during

during his absence, that displeased him, imagined that this infant had no right to call him father, or to share with his son, of whom he was passionately fond, the fortune he now saw a probability of raising. The injurious thoughts he conceived of his wife, he kept however secret, and the little girl was baptized in the usual form, and registered as the daughter of Joachim Cognot, and Mary Nassier his wife. She was put out to nurse; and about eighteen months afterwards, the Doctor, whose fame as a physician encreased, removed to Paris, and was soon established there in good practice.

The unfortunate victim of his jealousy, or of his wife's indiscretion, was left behind at Fontenay—and Cognot thought he had, in consequence of his removal, a fair opportunity of con-

cealing this child, whom he was determined to consider as a disgrace to himself, and an intruder on the property of his son. For this purpose he ordered her to be sent to Paris by a common carrier; whom he met, and took her, immediately on her arrival, to the Orsine, in the Fauxbourg St. Marceau, where lived a woman named Frances Fremont, the wife of a locksmith, called John Boutet, with whom he agreed to take the little girl at four livres a month. He paid a month's advance, gave the woman a piece of green serge to clothe the child, told her her christian name was Mary, but that she need not inquire her surname, and that she was something less than three years old.

The mother of the infant thus abandoned, had been forced, through dread

of

of her husband, and perhaps the terror of being exposed, to agree to this cruel concealment ; but her heart revolted against it, and, after a struggle of some months between her fear and her affection, she at length went privately to see her daughter. On entering the house, she enquired of the woman, whether she had not taken a little girl to nurse ? The woman answered that she had, and then, looking in the face of Madame Cognot, she was struck with the likeness between her and the child, and exclaimed — “ You, Madam, are certainly this little girl’s mother ! ”

Madame Cognot answered, in confusion, that she was not ; but her heart refused to confirm her denial, and, unable to conceal what she felt, she embraced the child, and burst into a passion

sion of tears. She quitted, however, the house as soon as she could recover herself, and, apprehending the effects of her husband's anger if she went thither again, she wholly forbore to see her daughter, and in lavishing on her son all her tenderness, endeavoured to forget the deserted infant who had a right to share it; but Heaven, as if to punish the cruelty and injustice, of which she and her husband had been guilty, took from them this beloved son. This stroke did not bring back the heart of Madame Cognot to a sense of her duty; the only use she made of it seems to have been, that of immediately prevailing on her husband to sign a deed, in which they agreed, that the survivor of them should possess the whole property which Cognot had accumulated.

In

In the mean time, the woman who nursed the little girl, took great care of her, though she was no longer paid. The child was of an amiable temper, and had so good an understanding, and a person so agreeable, that she interested every body in her favour, but particularly her nurse, who loved her as her own child, and, though she was very poor, never murmured at the burthen which had been imposed upon her. Till at length, sickness having disabled her and her husband, she fell into such extreme indigence, that she could no longer provide for her nursing the absolute necessaries of life ; she therefore determined, though with the utmost reluctance, to put her into the hospital, till she was old enough to earn her subsistence in a service, or till a more favourable hour should arrive

to

to herself, when she hoped again to be in condition to procure food and raiment for the unfortunate infant which she so tenderly loved.

Time however passed away, and the deserted girl continued in the hospital; where, notwithstanding the meanness and poverty of her condition, the understanding she had received from nature unfolded itself, and her gentleness and propriety of manners procured her the esteem of all who approached her. When she was almost fourteen years old, and qualified for a service, her nurse took her from the hospital, and put her, at very low wages, to be servant to a writing-master; where, while she earned her bread by hard labour, and was employed in the most servile offices, Doctor Cognot and his wife enjoyed affluence and prosperity,

beyond

beyond what they had formerly dared to hope. His practice had very much encreased, and he was appointed physician to Margaret de Valois, then Queen of France ; yet, persuaded that this poor girl was not his own, he determined not to let her benefit by his success, though he had no longer any child who would have been injured by her participation.—Sudden prosperity, which too often hardens the heart, had made that of Madame Cognot callous even to the tender sentiments of maternal pity and affection. Occupied by her unexpected good fortune, and by avaricious projects to secure it, in case of her husband's death, she had accustomed herself to conquer her feeling for her daughter till she no longer felt at all. It happened, soon after Mary had been sent to service,

that

that her nurse had occasion to visit an acquaintance in the Fauxbourg St. Germain. As she stood at the door talking with this friend, she saw Doctor Cognot pass along the street; and though she had only seen him once before, and fourteen years had elapsed since, his figure, which was very remarkable, was so deeply engraven on her memory, that she immediately recollect^{ed} him—
“Look,” said she to her acquaintance, “look at that little old man who is passing by. It is the same man who, fourteen years ago, brought poor little Mary to me—Can you tell me who he is?”—To this the other woman replied, that she knew him well; that he lived at an house but a few doors from thence, and his name was the Sieur Cognot, a physician in good practice.

The

The woman, Frances Fremont, determined to avail herself of this discovery, and soon learned that he attended the sick of a neighbouring convent. There she waited for him; and, as he left the door, she approached him, and said — “ Sir, it is now near fourteen “ years since you brought to me a “ little girl to nurse—will you not now “ take her back, and pay me for the “ time I have kept her?” — The Doctor, who was at first very much struck by this unexpected application, soon recovered his presence of mind, and told Frances Fremont that the child was not his, but belonged to the man who was with him: he inquired, however, where she was? and, being told that she was servant to a writing-master near the great steps of La—, and that she was then ill with a fever,

he took a direction to her, and promised to see her ; which he did.

This discovery he immediately communicated to his wife ; who, on hearing her daughter's situation, could not forbear feeling again that she was a mother, and that she wished to have her child rescued from the melancholy destiny to which she had been so long abandoned. Frances Fremont was not disposed to let these good dispositions languish for want of reminding the parents of their duty. She called upon them in a few days, and desired to be paid for her trouble, and the food and cloaths she had provided for the little girl. The Doctor bid her bring the girl thither, which she did the next day ; and on her being introduced to Madame Cognot, the latter, still affecting to conceal her real

situation,

situation, began to enquire of Frances Fremont, what were her qualifications and what wages she expected, as if she intended hiring her as a servant; to which Fremont answered, that she had not brought her thither to get her a service, but to be paid for the many years during which she had kept her, and to restore her to her parents; then looking steadily on Madame Cognot, she exclaimed, — “ You, Madam, are “ the same Lady who came to see “ Mary once, and wept over her, and “ I know you are her mother.” It was agreed that Mary should, for the present, remain with Doctor Cognot; but to people so avaricious it was less easy to determine to pay Fremont the long arrear due to her. They put her off from time to time, till her patience being exhausted, and her necessities

sities pressing, she determined to apply to a lawyer; and Doctor Cognot was summoned to appear before the Bailli of St. Germain.

Alarmed at this measure, and perceiving that if he suffered a suit against him to go on, the whole transaction, which he was so desirous to conceal, would be discovered; he thought it better to satisfy Fremont, and yet to conceal the birth of his daughter. For this purpose he caused a deed to be drawn up by a Notary, to this effect:— That whereas he was sued by Frances Fremont for a certain sum due to her, for the care and board of an infant called Mary, for the space of fourteen years, which child was not his, but belonged to the man whom he acknowledged to have been with; and

as

as he might be thought in some measure necessary to the expence brought on Frances Fremont, though it was merely by accident that it happened; yet he did agree, through motives of charity, to take the said Mary into his service, and to pay the sum of four hundred livres to the said Frances Fremont; on condition of having no farther trouble on the subject.—This deed was signed properly, and Mary was established in the house of her parents. At first she appeared there as a servant; but a servant whom her master and mistress could not resolve to treat as such. Her sole employment was working in the room with Madame Cognot, keeping her keys, and doing such little easy offices as might be required of a daughter. She dined at their table, was dressed better than

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a servant, and money was given her for which she was not expected to account. Still, however, she was not to be considered as any other than a stranger; and she was told that she was the daughter of a person called Croissant, and was called Mary Croissant; while the acquaintance of Madame Cognot, who observed the great likeness between her and this girl, concluded she was her niece, or some very near relation. But the old Doctor, who never lost the persuasion of his wife's infidelity (whether real or supposed) continued ever to look on her only as a servant, whose uncommon merit (which made an impression even on him) could not efface the prejudice he had conceived against her birth.—Under the conviction of her illegitimacy, he made his will anew, and, confirming

confirming the former act between him and his wife, which left the survivor in possession of the bulk of his fortune, he gave to Mary Croissant, whom he called his servant, the sum of six hundred livres as a legacy; and two years after making this will he died, at the age of eighty-six.

When he was dead, and his widow secured in the possession of his effects, she continued to observe the same conduct towards her daughter, and, making a kind of compromise between her avarice and her affection, still kept her with her, but still refused to acknowledge her as her daughter; because in that case she must have shared the property she now exclusively enjoyed.

Some time after a suitable match offering with Augustus de Seine, a man established in a reputable pro-

fession, she married her, under the name of Mary Croissant, her god-daughter. In this, as in every other part of her conduct, she seemed to unveil the mystery she endeavoured to conceal; doing too much for her if it was only an orphan taken out of charity as she pretended, and too little if it was her daughter. It happened that Marie de Seine (as she should now be called in consequence of her marriage) was one day assisting her mother to look over and arrange some papers of the old Doctor's. In doing so she cast her eye on a letter from her mother to him, in which were these words,—“ I recommend our children “ to your care : Attend to our little “ Mary, and see her often : I am busy “ making cloaths for her.”—Mary had before had suspicions of the truth;

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on the perusal of this letter, conviction flashed upon her; but her mother coming into the room from whence she had been a moment absent; she tried to conceal the letter in her pocket. The mother, however, instantly recollecting what it was, insisted on her returning it, which she for some time tried to evade; but her mother's commands being peremptory, she yielded to give up the letter, which had taught her to know to whom she belonged; but she said with tears to her mother, " Ah, madam, I am your daughter; I am the little Mary of whom you here speak so affectionately; why would you continue to disown me? I conjure you not to persist in being so cruel to me; but restore me to the place I have a right to, and you will not find me ungrateful."—

This pathetic remonstrance had its effect on the heart of Madame Cognot ; she owned that she was her mother, and declared she would take proper measures to enable her to own her as such without disgrace ; for she represented to her, that to do it suddenly, and without preparing her friends, would occasion many ill-natured reflections and much inconvenience ; and, she added, that a monk of the order of St. Francis, whom she had consulted, had told her, that she was not in conscience obliged to own her ; but that she must nevertheless support her as her daughter, and give her her fortune at her decease. — With a promise of being soon properly restored to her right, the young woman was for some time content, as she was every day in hopes that her mother would find the oppor-

opportunity she pretended to wait for; but she had soon the mortification to find, that other views occupied her, and that to do justice to her daughter, was farther than ever from her intention. A man called Nicholas Co-quant, who was without any property, and had a great number of children, was introduced to the widow Cognot; he soon found the means of gaining her good opinion; she married him, and from that period thought only of stifling the claims of her unfortunate daughter, and enriching the family on which she now had placed all her affections.

Her daughter, who saw all the fatal consequence of this new connection, conjured her by all that was just, by every consideration of affection and honour, to re-establish her in her rights,
before

before she made this imprudent marriage. But Madame Cognot was not to be moved by her tears and entreaties. The marriage took place, and her solicitations were renewed afterwards, though there was then little prospect of their success. Wearied at length with their ineffectual efforts, and despairing to move the implacable heart of her mother, she determined, in vindication of her own and her childrens rights, to have recourse to law; though it was with extreme reluctance she was driven to take such a resolution.—Madame Cognot being now again summoned before the Bailiff of St. Germain, had recourse to all the chicane of the law. She was obliged however to undergo an examination; in the course of which a perpetual contest between her avarice, her fear

of detection, and her consciousness of the truth, evidently appeared. On being asked if she had not a daughter born at Fontanay de Compte, called Mary, and in what year? she answered, that she had, but the year she could not remember. On being farther asked, what was become of her? she said, the child was put to nurse with the wife of a baker; and that four or five months afterwards, on her return from a journey to Bar sur Seine, where she had passed some time, her husband informed her that the child was dead; and that she never enquired any more about it. On being questioned, how she came to receive the plaintiff into her house, and to place her in a rank so different from servitude? she replied, that in returning home one day, she found at her house

two women and a little girl ; and that her husband said to her, These women have brought a little girl to be your servant, who will be very faithful. That she asked Fremont, one of the women, how much wages she was to give her ? who answered, that wages were no object ; that she thereupon detained her in her service, and that the girl had lived with her from that time till she settled her in marriage. Many other contradictory and incoherent answers, plainly evinced the difficulty of concealing the truth. This appeared so clearly to the Bailiff of St. Germain, that he gave sentence ; wherein he ordered Madame Coquant to receive and acknowledge Mary Cognot, the wife of Augustus de Seine, as her daughter ; and condemned her to pay twenty-four louis.

as costs ; to divide all the property of the deceased Joachim Cognot with her daughter ; to whom liberty was also given to sue for the arrears and profits received since his death.

From this sentence Madame Coquant appealed to the parliament ; a provision of four hundred livres was allowed to Mary de Seine, to enable her to carry on the suit ; they both underwent an examination ; and the suit went on in the usual forms.

But Madame Coquant having found that her daughter had been put into the hospital by her nurse, contrived to get access to the book, where all the children received into that asylum, are registered. She found the name of her daughter written there ; but simply as Mary the daughter of —— a blank being left after the incomplete name. This blank she contrived to have

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have filled up, so that the register ran thus — Mary Boutet, a foundling; suckled by the wife of John Boutet, deceased.

When the cause came on, Monsieur de Maitre, counsel for Mary de Seine, recapitulated the events of her life with great precision and exactness,— he proved all the facts here related incontrovertibly ; and as to the register of the hospital, he made the alteration clearly appear, as well as the falsehood it asserted. For Frances Fremont the wife of John Boutet, whose name had been inserted, had never had a child, and of course could not have suckled a foundling ; whom in fact she never saw till she was three years old.

The defence set up by the mother and her husband was so feeble, and the legitimacy of Mary de Seine was proved so much to the satisfaction of the court, that a definitive sentence

was

THE DESERTED DAUGHTER. III

was obtained in favour of her and her children ; whereby the gift of Joachim Cognot to his wife was annulled — half the effects left by him at his death was awarded to his daughter, after deducting half his funeral expences, the provision made for his wife on her marriage, and his legacies.—Nicholas Coquant and his wife were to bear the costs ; and forbidden to damage, conceal, or dissipate the residue of the effects of Joachim Cognot, which, after the death of the mother, were to descend to the daughter and her children.

By this equitable decision the unnatural parent was punished for her avarice and cruelty ; the hitherto unhappy young woman reinstated in the rank to which she had an undoubted right ; and the injury done her by

the jealous suspicions of one of her parents, or the unguarded conduct of the other, was repaid by the justice of her country. She appears to have merited her good fortune, and to have been an instance that the force of natural good sense and a virtuous disposition can alone counteract all the disadvantages of birth, and all the influence of a mean or neglected education. While her story may serve to guard the mother, who respects the peace of her children, from being guilty of indiscretions which may raise, in jealous and suspicious minds, opinions and prejudices, so fatal to the innocent objects on which the punishment of guilt, or of imprudence, too frequently falls.

From Guyot de Pitaval.

LA

LA PIVARDIÈRE.

LOUIS de la Pivardiere, Sieur du Bouchet, was a gentleman of a very ancient family, but being a younger brother, and his family having lost much of its former opulence in the convulsions that had agitated the kingdom, his fortune was hardly enough to support him with decency, in the province of which he was a native; and it must have been inconsiderable indeed, if the small possessions of the woman he married, induced him to unite himself with her, for they did not amount to above a thousand livres a year; and she had the five children of her former husband to maintain;

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being the widow of the Sieur de Menou, and about five and thirty years of age. Her income arose from the estate and chateau of Nerbonne, where she resided; and whither, on his marriage with her, Monsieur de la Pivardiere went to reside also.

In 1689, on the Arriere ban being called out, the Sieur de la Pivardiere served as Lord of Nerbonne, which he possessed in right of his wife, and obtained a lieutenancy in a regiment of dragoons. This absence was probably equally agreeable to Monsieur and Madame de la Pivardiere, for they had long lived very uneasily together. On his return their dissensions increased; for the tongue of malice had been very busy with the fame of the lady. The Prior of a neighbouring monastery had been too assi-

duous in his attentions to Madame de Pivardiere; and though there was a chapel in the castle of Nerbonne, where his duty obliged him to say mass every Saturday, the neighbourhood would not allow that to be a sufficient reason for his passing almost every day thiere, on a footing of familiarity with Madame de la Pivardiere, which might be very innocent; but could hardly fail of being thought otherwise. The observations which this intiinacy had excited, in a place, where people having little to engage their attention, are obliged to bestow much of it on their neighbours, were soon communicated to the husband on his return, and increased the disgust he had conceived towards his wife. But disdaining to appear jealous of the honour of a woman whom he had probably never loved,

and now thoroughly disliked, he determined to quit his house again, and leave her to the society of the Prior, or whoever else she preferred. After a short stay therefore at Nerbonne, he took his horse, and for some time wandered from one town to another, till chance led him to Auxerre, where, in strolling on the ramparts of the town, he saw a party of girls dancing: one of them was uncommonly pretty, and La Pivardiere followed her home, where he found that she was the daughter of a Huissier*, who had kept a little ale-house in the suburbs, where his widow still lived. Access to an inhabitant of such a place was not difficult; La Pivardiere took a lodg-

* An inferior post in the law or police, something resembling the Bailiffs or Sheriffs officers.

in the house, and boarded with the widow, under the name of Du Bouchet. But he soon found that the object of his wishes, though of humble fortune, had principles too strict to listen to him, on any other terms than those of honour, and that he must marry her, or quit her. After a short struggle with his pride, and his apprehensions of detection, love got the better of both. He determined to forget that he was born a gentleman, and, as far as he could, to obliterate the remembrance of his name, and (what he was more desirous of burying in oblivion) his marriage with Madame de Menou. He took upon him the charge vacant by the recent death of the girl's father, married her, and became, jointly with her mother, keeper of the ale-house, where they all resided. He

lived for some months perfectly happy with his new wife, who became pregnant; a circumstance that probably made La Pivardiere think more steadily of fixing his present establishment on the securest basis it would admit. He determined to go back to Nerbonne, to receive what money was due from the tenants, and to return with it as soon as possible to his new family at Auxerre. On his arrival at the chateau of Nerbonne, he found the Prior with Madame de Pivardiere; of which, being wholly occupied by the purpose of his journey, he took no notice. She received him with extreme coldness; and, as he told her he was just come from his regiment, to which he must immediately return, she was more desirous of procuring him the money he wanted, to hasten his departure,

tare, than anxious to make his stay agreeable. As soon as he had collected all the money he could, he returned impatiently to Auxerre, where his young wife soon after lay in. The second, third, and fourth year, in every one of which she brought him a child, La Pivardiere made the same journey, with the same view of obtaining money, and without scruple took from his former wife and his child (for he had at least one daughter by her) their subsistence, to support his new connections, and his increasing family.

Though this commerce had been carried on for four years without discovery, it could not always continue concealed. Madame de la Pivardiere was at length informed, that her husband lived with another woman; but though she had gained this information, she

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was ignorant of the name and residence of this person, so carefully had M. de la Pivardiere eluded the eyes of curiosity, in his various tours to Narbonne.

The fourth of these journeys, however, was less fortunate than the preceding three. Just before he arrived at his chateau, his wife had received the intelligence of his infidelity, and knew how to account for his yearly visit, which she found was not to obtain money to support his rank in the army, but to bestow on another family.— Though already estranged from him, the mortifying assurance of his preference of another, was too painful to her vanity, and she determined not to conceal the bitterness and anger which she felt. It happened that he arrived at Narbonne on the fête of Notre Dame,

Dame, in the month of August; on occasion of which festival Madame de la Pivardiere had entertained a party of friends at dinner, among whom her constant attendant, the Prior of Mezarray, was not forgotten. They were yet in the height of their social entertainment when La Pivardiere entered, about sun-set. The company received him with great marks of respect, and the Prior was particularly polite, and affected the greatest satisfaction at his return. But Madame de la Pivardiere looked so coldly on him, and answered his enquiries with so sullen and discontented an air, that the company began to grow uneasy, and one of the ladies said aside to M. de la Pivardiere, "Is it thus that a husband is received, after so long an absence?" To which he answered, "I am indeed her husband,

“ husband, but her affections are another’s.” The party soon after broke up, and left Monsieur and Madame de la Pivardiere alone. She remained some time with him, but was obstinately silent; and when she arose, and went to her chamber, he followed her, and insisted on knowing the reason of such a reception. “ Go (said she, in an angry tone) go, ask of the woman you live with, and to whom you pretend to be married, the reason of my rage and indignation.” All La Pivardiere could say, to erase the idea of his having another wife, only irritated Madame de la Pivardiere; who, though she was totally indifferent to her husband, was stung to the soul at the thoughts of a rival. After some fruitless attempts to appease her, she flung from him, saying, that he should soon see whether

whether he should with impunity insult and rob her. The husband, despairing to reconcile her, left her, and retired to a room prepared for him. But, alarmed at her threats, which he imagined meant that she would have him arrested, and punished for bigamy, (which one of the servants, who was in her confidence, assured him she intended), and not chusing again to expose himself to the fury of an enraged woman, he arose before break of day, and taking his gun with him, and a dog who always followed him, set out on foot for Auxerre. He had lame'd his horse in coming from thence, and had been obliged to lead it by the bridle for some miles ; he therefore thought it best to leave the horse behind him : and, as it was in the month of August, and he had little occasion for a cloak,

which

which would he thought encumber him too much, he left that, together with his pistols, in his chamber.

The next morning Monsieur de la Pivardiere was missed, and no one knew whither he was gone; his horse, his cloak, and his pistols being left, made an extraordinary impression on the neighbours; and, after a few days, a report obtained, that his wife, assisted by the Prior of Mezaray, had caused him to be assassinated. By degrees the rumour increased among the common people, who love the terrible and the marvellous, and at length it grew so loud, that justice affected to be obliged to notice it. Madame de la Pivardiere, informed of the storm that was gathering, secured the best of her furniture and effects, and retired to the house of Madame d'Auneüil, her friend,

friend, where she waited the event of the proceedings, which the officers of justice now began. One of them arrived at Nerbonne, where he examined fifteen witnesses. Two servants, who were more immediately employed about the apartments, were taken into custody. They both, on being interrogated, owned that Monsieur de la Pivardiere had been assassinated. The first, who was called Margaret Mercier, and who was her mistress's god-daughter, and a great favourite with her, declared that she had sent every body away, who was likely to prevent the murder, and had introduced two servants of the Prior of Mezaray into her master's bed-chamber, who had killed him; to which she added several circumstances which seemed to confirm the truth of her story. The other maid-

maid-servant, named Catharine le Moine, corroborated this account; and, what appeared yet more convincing, the daughter of de la Pivardiere, a girl about eight or nine years old, said, that in the night she was alarmed by hearing her father's voice, who cried,—
“ Oh my God, have mercy upon me!”

In these accounts they all firmly persisted; and the neighbours declared that they remembered to have heard the report of a gun or pistol, during the night.—Margaret Mercier being taken dangerously ill, and being about to receive the last sacraments, again protested that all she had said was true, and that the Prior had himself assisted, and had given the final blow which deprived de la Pivardiere of his life.

On receiving these depositions, the officers of justice, of whom the judge of Chatillon

Chatillon was chief, ordered Madame de la Pivardiere to be prosecuted ; and, as the Prior of Mezaray was included in the accusation, a like order was issued against him. The judge of Chatillon was said to be the inveterate enemy of the Prior de Mezaray ; and, from the circumstances that attended the affair, it seems probable that that enmity was the cause of all the measures which were taken, to fix on the Prior a share of a crime which had not been committed, and that the evidence given by the two maids, was in consequence of the rewards offered them by this officer, who wished to gratify, under the cloak of justice, his private hatred and revenge.

The circumstance of Madame de la Pivardiere's quitting her house, seemed to be a strong argument of her guilt.

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As soon as she was gone, the lieutenant of the police went thither to examine the chateau; and in his account he asserted, among many other particulars, which seemed to confirm the assassination, that blood was found on the floor of the room where de la Pivardiere had slept. Madame de la Pivardiere then went to Paris, where she laid before a superior court, an account of the prosecution that had been commenced against her, and desired that cognizance might be taken of it, by its being referred to an officer of the law more impartial than him who had instituted the process. Her request was granted, and the judge of Remorentin was directed to investigate the whole.

In the mean time Madame de la Pivardiere assiduously employed herself

self in endeavours to discover the place of her husband's retreat. She traced him, by persons who had met him on the road, as far as Auxerre; but there they lost all intelligence. They therefore began to enquire narrowly into the probability of his being in that town, and with some difficulty discovered him keeping a little public house, and, under the name of Du Bouchet, acting as a Huissier. He soon found that agents from his wife were in pursuit of him; and, fearing that she was now about to have him confined for bigamy, he fled from his house; but his pursuers overtook him at Flavigny, and quieted his fears on that account, by informing him that he had nothing to apprehend from his wife at present, in regard to his liberty, for that his appearance was absolutely ne-

cessary to save her life. He no sooner learned this, than, forgetting all their animosity, he hastened to clear her from the imputation of so horrid a crime. His second wife generously encouraged him to this exertion; and, far from resenting the injury he had done her by a feigned marriage, or wishing to destroy her rival, she was anxiously desirous of saving her from the fatal consequence of a false accusation.

Dé la Pivardiere went before a notary at Auxerre, where he signed a declaration of his being living and in health. He wrote also to his wife and to his brother, who in their answers informed him his presence was absolutely necessary at Nerbonne. Thither therefore he went, and found his chateau plundered of every thing: the best of his effects his wife had removed, to secure them;

them; the rest, as she had foreseen, were the prey of the officers of justice.

He presented himself before the judge of Remorentin, and desired that the authenticity of his appearance might be testified by the proper persons, and that he would accompany him to Nérbonne. On their arrival, the inhabitants of the village, the tenants and neighbours of La Pivardiere, signed the testimonial of his being alive; he went from thence to the little town of Jeumaloches, and being desirous to shew himself as publicly as possible, he entered the church just as vespers began on St. Anthony's day, who being the tutelary Saint of the parish, and of the church, it was on that occasion very much crowded. Had the most frightful spectre entered, it could

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hardly have caused a greater alarm, or more sudden surprise; for so much pains had been taken to persuade the people of the death of La Pivardiere, that they could hardly believe he was living, though they saw him before them.

But notwithstanding the undoubted certainty of his being alive, such is the singular power lodged in the hands of the provincial judges in France, and such the abuse often made of it, that the judge of Chatillon still carried on the prosecution; the suspension of the Prior of Mezaray was continued, and his benefices for the time remained under confiscation.— To ruin him, seems to have been the sole reason for so extraordinary and so absurd a procedure, as that which still attempted,

attempted to establish proof of the death of a man, who was living and present.

The two servants were confined in the prison of Chatillon, where this magistrate had them entirely in his power, and where his offers of reward and threats of punishment were all employed to bring them to his purpose. The judge of Remorentin took De la Pivardiere to these women; who, being now consummate in perjury, alledged that the person they at present saw, pretending to be Monsieur de la Pivardiere their master, was an impostor, whom they knew not. But the judge of Chatillon, apprehending that they would not have strength of mind long to persist in a falsehood so glaring, forbade the judge of Remorentin and La Pivardiere admission to the prison;

and he ordered De la Pivardiere to be stopped, that he might be examined.— La Pivardiere was by no means inclined to put himself in the power of a man, who had gone such lengths to prove him dead; he was besides apprehensive, that the affair of his having two wives would be productive of fatal consequence, from which, if he were once in custody, he could not escape. For these reasons, he refused to obey the order of the judge of Chatillon, and went from thence with the judge of Remorentin, who afterwards accompanied him to all his relations; to those who were present when he arrived at the chateau of Nerbonne, the night of his supposed assassination; to his two sisters, nuns in the Ursuline convent at Valence: and his person was by all these people acknowledged and

and identified. Having taken all these methods to clear his wife from the imputation against her, and remained three weeks with her and his relations, he concluded that he should have no more trouble with this extraordinary affair.

But the judge of Chatillon would not so easily relinquish the prey he held with the strong grasp of authority. He found, that as he had gone so far, the boldest steps only could carry him on. He arrested the Prior of Mezaray, put irons on his legs, and threw him into the prison of Chatillon; and began a suit against the judge of Remorentin, for interfering in his district; and at length obtained an arrêt against his future proceedings.

After various appeals and evasions, which, as the principal facts are known,

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After various appeals and evasions, which, as the principal facts are known,

it would be tedious and uninteresting to recapitulate, the cause was heard before the parliament of the province. The judge of Chatillon died before it came on; and his heirs, ashamed probably of a transaction that would throw infamy on his memory, petitioned for leave to withdraw; but De la Pivardiere, and the Prior of Mezaray, now insisted on its being brought to an issue. It was heard accordingly. No damages were allowed De la Pivardiere for all the injury he had sustained, as the judge was supposed to have proceeded originally on good grounds. But Margaret Mercier, the principal witness, who had perjured herself in three or four instances, was to make the *amende honorable*, by standing in a sheet at the door of the church of Chatillon, holding a torch

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in her hand ; and there, on her knees, and in an audible voice, to acknowledge that she had borne false witness, for which she asked pardon of God and the injured parties ; afterwards she was to be whipped, burnt with a hot iron, and banished the province for ever.

Madame de la Pivardiere, the Prior of Mezaray, and his servants, were declared innocent, and discharged from any future trouble.

This affair terminated, De la Pivardiere could not determine to reside with his wife, whose attachment to the Prior he still remembered—nor would he now return to his imaginary wife and her children, unless to bid them an eternal adieu.—The Duke de Feuillade, whose distant relation he was, gave him an employment, such as we now

call

call an office in the revenue; in exercising which, he was killed in a skirmish with a party of smugglers. Not long afterwards, Madame de la Pivardiere was found dead in her bed—and his second wife married another person. The Prior of Mezaray lived to a very advanced age, and long survived those whose connections with him had been so fatal to their repose.

From Guyot de Pitaval.

THE

CONTESTED MARRIAGE.

COURTIN de Villiers, a young officer of a noble family, being in garrison at Metz, became acquainted with Madame Geoffroi, who having been left a widow, while yet in the earliest bloom of youth, resided there with the mother of her deceased husband. De Villiers, who was at first attracted by the beauty of the young widow, found the charms of her understanding, and the sweetness of her temper, equal to the perfections of her person. He found also, that all hopes of forming with her a connection of gallantry, were rashly

rashly entertained; and that his addresses must be open, and authorised by the laws of honour. The longer his acquaintance continued, the more impossible he found it to quit her; but he knew he must not hope for the consent of his father and his mother; yet, flattering himself, that if he were actually married he should obtain their pardon, and his insurmountable passion urging him to hazard the trial, he prevailed on Madame Geoffroi, who was not insensible of his merit or his affection, to consent to a union, which it was not possible for them to celebrate in France with the usual forms. Her father was yet living, and had not been consulted; and the parents of De Villiers, he was sure, would refuse their consent, without which, as he was but two-and-twenty, and the lady only

three months older, they could not be married according to law. The mother of her first husband, with whom Madame Geoffroi resided, moved by the importunities of Villiers, and the wishes of her daughter, consented to assist at, and to conceal the marriage; but as no priest dared solemnize it at Metz, they were still embarrassed with difficulties, that seemed insurmountable, till the Almoner of the regiment to which Villiers belonged told them, he could marry them in Lorraine, that country being then under the government of its own princes, and the laws in force there, in regard to marriage, did not require the consent of parents to the marriage of minors.

The Almoner therefore was sent into Lorraine, with the secrecy his scheme required.

required. Thither he was followed by Villiers and the fair widow; and as soon as they were married they returned to Metz, equally happy in their union; and not doubting its legality, after the precautions they had taken. Madame Villiers, about ten months afterwards, was delivered of a son; an event which, while it encreased the happiness of her husband, made him reflect with anxiety on the disadvantage under which this beloved infant might lie, from the clandestine manner of its parents marriage. Not daring to baptize it by his own name, he called it Tincour de Virilles an anagram on the name of Courtin de Villiers.

As soon as his wife was well enough to allow him to quit her, Villiers, who grew more uneasy every day for the fate of his son, went to Paris. He
there

there addressed himself to the Sieur de Lalande, the father of Madame Villiers, and besought, in the most affecting manner, his approbation of their marriage; but he found only anger and indignation, which embittered the absolute refusal he received. To add to his unhappiness, his father and mother were by this time informed of his connection; and he heard that they had not only passed an act, which disinherited him, if he did not immediately relinquish his wife, but had commenced a suit against her for seduction, and having made a pretended marriage with a minor.

Their first measure was, to petition for leave to collect information. It was obtained, and the wife of Villiers was summoned to appear. She appealed against the summons, and procured

cured an arret, in the name of the widow Geoffroi, which delayed any further proceedings for some time. In the mean time Villiers, and every friend he could interest on his behalf, tried, by entreaties and supplications, to prevail on his parents to ratify by their consent a union on which the happiness of their son depended. But it was in vain he endeavoured to move them by tears and prayers; in vain his friends interceded for him, with remonstrance and exhortation: his parents were inexorable; and, hoping that time and possession, which so often cure excessive passions, would, before many months were elapsed, make their son as anxious to break his connection as he now was to confirm it, they persevered in those measures, by which they hoped to render the marriage

riage abortive, and the child illegitimate. While they were prosecuting these measures, Villiers and his family were reduced to the cruelest exigence. His allowance had been withdrawn, and he had no longer money to support his rank in his regiment, or to procure his wife and his child the necessaries they required. The expences of the suit filled up the measure of those inconveniencies to which they were expos'd ; and when he found that his father would furnish him with nothing till he disowned his marriage, he was obliged, rather than see those he so tenderly loved subject to the distresses of poverty, to agree to say whatever they would have him, and even to procure a certificate, which on being delivered to the minis-

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ter * of the war department, Monsieur Chamillard, he received a sum of money, with which he determined to wait his majority, and then to endeavour to have his marriage confirmed, or at least to try whether his parents could then prevent his renewing an engagement, in which only the satisfaction of his life consisted.

As soon as that period arrived, he produced to a notary the certificate of his marriage; he had by this time prevailed on the Sieur Lalande, his wife's father, not only to forgive the indiscretion she had been guilty of, but to enter warmly into their mutual interest, and endeavour to secure a marriage, which could not be dissolved,

* It does not appear how the Sieur de Villiers's marriage could interest this minister.

without covering with dishonour a daughter of whom he was deservedly fond. Villiers now signified to his parents, that he was determined to maintain the validity of his marriage: whereupon they again applied to have it set aside, as being wholly illegal.

Their son, at the same time, presented to the same tribunal a request, that if his marriage was found good, it might be legally established. The parents opposed it, and in their opposition were sustained by the whole power and interest of the families allied to that of Villiers, who became almost all parties. The Sieur Dupin, who was appointed to act for the infant born of this contested marriage, demanded, that if the first marriage should be declared null, his ward

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should nevertheless be declared legitimate, in consequence of the second; or fully established in all the claims of his birth, if it should be confirmed. In this state the contending parties brought the cause to an hearing; and the Sieur Guyot de Chesne undertook the pleadings for the father and mother of Villiers.

* He defended the importance of the paternal authority, as well as the force of those laws which the younger M. de Villiers had violated, by entering into engagements expressly forbidden. He said that his clients believed that their honour required them to oppose a marriage, which was degrading to their son and injurious to

* Pleadings of Guyot de Chesne, on behalf of the Sieur Villiers the elder, and his wife, against their son's marriage.

his

his family ; since he was of illustrious rank ; and the woman with whom he desired to ally himself, greatly inferior to him. Men of high birth should carefully guard against their children's forming alliances with those beneath them, and should preserve untainted the honourable blood they derive from a long line of ancestors. But in fact, the connection which Captain de Villiers had formed with the widow Geofroi, had as yet thrown no blemish on his exalted birth, for it was no marriage. That therefore being out of the question, all that remained was to know, whether, notwithstanding his being no longer a minor, he could now contract a marriage, to which his parents were determined never to consent.

To prove that the marriage was not

only illegal in itself, but that the very certificate was a forgery, he said it was signed by the Priest, with a title which exists not in the church; and the place of celebration, which at the first writing of the certificate had been omitted, had been afterwards interlined. Besides, the defence set up was in the name of the widow Geoffroi ; which name she should certainly not have continued, while conscious she was the wife of De Villiers. The young man had, moreover, given to the minister, Chamillard, an assurance in writing, that he was not married, and had repeated the same in letters to his mother. And if he afterwards affirmed what he had so repeatedly denied, it could be imputed only to the influence which the Sieur Lalande, with whom he now lived, had acquired over him, and of

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his love for the widow, who employed all her art, and all her charms, to retain him in the fetters she had forged for him. Why, if the parties were conscious that they were married, did they baptize the child, born of the marriage, by a fictitious name? and not suffer it to bear that of either of its parents? The proofs that the intended marriage was invalid, being thus indisputable, it remained to be known, whether the son of an illustrious family, connected with the noblest houses in the kingdom, could, without the consent of his parents, ally himself with the daughter of an obscure man, who, from a very low station, had by dint of long service obtained the rank of Brigadier; and, though it could not be denied, that his wife, who was of the house of Balletrier in Artois, was the

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daughter of a very ancient family, yet the nobility of his wife could not conceal or amend his own low origin.

Besides the inequality of birth, the inequality of fortune was also great, between the widow Geoffroi and Captain de Villiers. The Sieur Lande, her father, boasted, it is true, of an income of twenty-five thousand livres a year; but when he was asked to name the estates, or source, from whence this revenue arose, he brought no proof that he really possessed it. In the contract of marriage made between his daughter and Monsieur Geoffroi, her first husband, he had agreed to give her a portion of twenty-five thousand livres; but they did not appear ever to have been paid. Yet she possessed nothing else, or any security that her father would give her a

share

share of his fortune, wherever it lay. It was said, that the mother of Monsieur Geoffroi meant to make her her heir; but of this there was no certainty: as to the jointure of a thousand livres a year, which she was paid from the property of her first husband, it was not only trifling in itself, but terminated with her life.—Captain de Villiers, though his parents had three other children, another son and two daughters, was yet to be considered as heir to the greater part of his father's property, amounting to above four hundred thousand livres; his brother being in the order of Malta, and his two sisters having only very small portions, if they did not (as they probably would) take the veil. The disparity therefore between his fortune, and that of the widow Geoffroi, was evidently so

so great, that his parents thought they had on that account, as well as on that of the inequality of birth, a right steadily to oppose the confirmation or renewal of a match, so ruinous to the interest of their son, and so disagreeable to themselves. But were not their objections to the marriage so numerous, and so invincible, from these reasons; the seduction which had been practised on their son, was a circumstance in itself sufficient to make them determine, never to consent to his marrying a woman capable of such practice. Her mother-in-law had assisted her, and her father had joined in the unjustifiable means that had been used to fascinate his judgment and subvert his understanding — whence he had become, not only estranged from his family, but careless of the evil with which

which he was threatened; that of being disinherited and disowned by a justly-offended father. And though the parents, and their relations, could not positively affirm that the widow Geofroi was a woman of loose character, yet a widow of her age, encouraging the visits of officers in garrison, could certainly not be thought entirely blameless; and as she was older than the Chevalier Villiers, who had just left the bosom of his family, there was every appearance, that very dishonourable means had been used to obtain his affections; means, which amounted to the crime of seduction, and which therefore rendered her incapable of being received as his wife, and even liable to punishment. *That*, however, the Sieur de Villiers and his family did not insist on; they only desired that

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the Chevalier Villiers might for ever be separated from her, and restored to his family. And as to the child, who must at all events be considered as the natural son of the Chevalier Villiers, he might be acknowledged as such, if the Chevalier chose so to acknowledge him; but cannot be received into society, or into the family of Villiers, in any other rank.

These pleadings for the Sieur de Villiers and his family, against the marriage, being finished, Monsieur Blaru undertook the defence of Madame Geoffroi and her infant son.—* He said, that if ever a marriage was made perfectly consonant to reason, it was that which was now attempted to be broken, by the unreasonable ambition, and unjust pre-

* Pleadings of the Sieur Blaru, on behalf of the defendant Geoffroi, and her son.

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the wife of the Chevalier de Villiers had answered her summons in the name of the widow Geoffroi. And if the Chevalier de Villiers had denied his marriage, it was through the pressing exigence to which he was reduced; when his father no longer allowed him money, and he could not either support his wife and his child, or furnish himself with necessaries for the campaign, on which his duty obliged him to serve. On reference to the letters and papers, wherein he had disowned his marriage, it appeared that he had said only that "he was not married " at Paris;" which was in fact true, and by this equivocation he had obtained the money, without which he must have suffered both in his love and in his honour; and though an equivocation was certainly derogatory to his sentiments of rectitude, yet necessity,

necessity, from which there is no defence, had obliged him to break through the niceties, which he had till then respected. The same motives had obliged him to baptize his child by a fictitious name, under which however he had concealed the letters of his own; so that by a slight transposition they formed Courtin de Villiers. In this innocent deception the mother, who was confined at the time, had no part. But admitting that the marriage contracted between the Chevalier de Villiers, and Julia Lalande the widow of the Sieur Geoffroi, was invalid, because it was celebrated while they were both minors, without the consent of the parents of either, and not by the curate of the parish to which either of them belonged—the question now is, whether, as they have both attained their majority, they may

not

not be legally united, the opposition of the parents of the Chevalier Villiers notwithstanding.

The first reason they alledged for this opposition was the inequality of birth between the parties; in endeavouring to prove which, they had falsified facts relative to the Sieur de Lalande. This gentleman was originally of a good family in England; and, though he could not from thence be accounted noble in France, yet he had obtained a certificate of his rank from the king of England, in consequence of which the king of France had granted him letters of nobility. His father had from thence taken the title of Seigneur de Lalande, which his elder brother now possessed, together with several estates belonging to the family. But were it true that the nobility of the Sieur de

Lalande

Lalande was merely personal ; as it must have been acquired by long and meritorious service in the army, it must be esteemed more honourable for him, and reflect greater credit on his family ; as it had raised him undoubtedly to a rank which entitled him to call himself gentleman, for he was a knight of St. Louis, governor of the citadel of Metz, and a brigadier in the army.

Their second plea, that of disparity of fortune, was equally ill-founded. The Sieur de Lalande was possessed of several estates ; his wife was of an illustrious family in Artois, and by the death of her relations she now possessed, in her right, the estates of the family, to the amount of more than ten thousand livres a year ; besides which, the Sieur de Lalande posse-

fed other property, which made the whole of his income above twenty-five thousand livres: and if the Sieur de Villiers would agree to let the cause be concluded by the union of the young people, on condition that he should produce for his daughter a sum equal to what the Sieur de Villiers would immediately give his son, he was content to abide by the issue. In this part of his pleading, the counsellor Blaru addressed himself to Madame de Villiers, mother of the Chevalier, who was in court: "Do you hear, Madam," said he, "the offer I make, and do you understand that I am authorized by my client to propose these terms to you?" The lady remaining silent, he repeated this proposal; to which no answer being given, he said, that he apprehended his

client, so far from being very much inferior to the Sieur Villiers in point of fortune, was really in a condition to wish to be put to this proof, which his adversary could not venture to accept.

The third objection, brought by the Sieur de Villiers against the daughter of his client, was founded on reflections on her conduct, equally injurious and unjust, since the adverse party knew it was so irreproachable, that, though they had employed every possible method to discover some indiscretion, some error, none could be produced against her; they were therefore forced to content themselves with remote hints and groundless presumptions; but, as the honour of a woman, and above all of a young and beautiful woman in her situation, is the most delicate, and most easily blemished, he

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determined to wipe off the stain these cruel, though remote hints might leave, by producing testimony of her conduct. He then proved by witnesses, that not only during her first marriage and widowhood, her character had been unimpeached, notwithstanding her youth, and the uncommon attractions of her person; but that since she had been connected with the Chevalier de Villiers, it had been so irreproachable, that malice itself had never dared to throw on it the slightest reflection. The best proof, that the Chevalier himself was as much attached to her from the conviction of her virtue and goodness, as by her personal beauty, was, the eagerness with which he sought to confirm, or to renew, a marriage, which he preferred to all the satisfaction a great fortune could bestow;

flow; and was content to be cut off from his family, and lose his inheritance, rather than abandon a wife so worthy of his tenderness and constancy. Had not the excellent character and numerous virtues of his wife secured the heart her eminent beauty first attracted, it was probable, that a young man, after a three years marriage, would willingly avail himself of the opportunity he now had to recover his liberty, and reconcile himself to his father. The conduct of the Chevalier de Villiers was the best eulogy on the merit of his wife.

The charge of seduction, the most dangerous of all the allegations against Julie de Lalande, the widow of the Sieur Geoffroi, alone remained to be controverted. The plaintiffs had asserted, that being a widow, and older

than the Chevalier de Villiers, and being besides assisted in her enterprize by her father, and her late husband's mother, she had artfully inveigled the Chevalier into a clandestine marriage; who was, from his inexperience and youth, liable to fall into the snare. But the facts were here greatly misrepresented. In regard to age, the Chevalier was only three months younger than Madame Geoffroi; and in point of experience, it is inconceivable that a young man, who had been two years a mousquetaire, as long aid de camp to Marshal Boufflers, and three years a captain of horse, should be without knowledge of the world, and unable to discover the artful practices of the defendants, had any such been used; yet he is represented as a novice,

novice, without judgment, and incapable of conducting himself.

And why should Madame Geoffroi wish to engage the Chevalier Villiers, had not a mutual affection bound them to each other ? She lived easy and respected with her mother-in-law ; she was young, beautiful, and consequently much followed and admired, and had among her lovers several of established fortune, and of higher rank ; with whom she would not have experienced the inconveniences and persecutions to which her present union had exposed her. Her prospects of fortune from her father were at least equal to those of the Chevalier de Villiers ; and, being born a gentlewoman, she might justly aspire to an union with a man of family ; why, therefore, should the Chevalier Villiers be an object to her,

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and what should attach her to him, but that disinterested and sincere affection, which induced her to prefer him to the rest of mankind, and even to her own peace and convenience?

— The charge of seduction, brought against the Sieur de Lalande, her father, was equally groundless. He was at first ignorant of the marriage; and, when he was informed of it, expressed what he really felt, anger and indignation, foreseeing all the ill consequences of such an indiscreet connection. But the honour of his daughter, and the welfare of his grandson, obliged him, since the thing was done, to receive his daughter, and to endeavour to have her marriage confirmed. He is accused of keeping the Chevalier de Villiers always with him, and by that means depriving him of the freedom

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of choice. That assertion is contradicted by the notorious fact of the Chevalier's having made two campaigns since his marriage, when he was many months absent from his wife and her family. On his return, to winter at home, he presented himself at the door of his father's house; he was refused admission; it was then natural for him to go where his wife and child were, and to make his abode with the Sieur de Lalande. In fact, he had, during his minority, neither home or support but with his wife; since he attained his majority, he had removed from the house of his wife's father: the idea, therefore, of his being under guidance or influence, was wholly unfounded. It was also said, that the Sieur de Lalande had impressed fears on the mind of the Chevalier de Villiers.

Villiers. He did indeed fear — but what? — he feared to become perjured and faithless; to act against his conscience, against the laws of nature and humanity; against the peace and honour of a virtuous and innocent woman, and a child who claimed all his tenderness and protection. — These crimes he certainly was afraid to commit; and the fear of such guilt was so great, that he lost the lesser fear of being disinherited, though the consequence were to be the loss of a splendid fortune, and, what he valued more, his father's favour. However flattering it would be to him to possess both, he could not do it by an act which would make him guilty and unworthy in his own eyes, and in those of every man of honour; his hope therefore was, that in his profession he might

might acquire that fortune which he would not owe to perjury and injustice, and that his sword would be the means of repairing the injustice of his father: and, if he must chuse between possessing unstained the honour of his wife, his child, and himself, though in the lowest indigence; or of forfeiting it all to become the heir to his father's fortune, and to be restored to his favour; he preferred poverty, endured from principle, to affluence, so dearly bought, and which he never could enjoy with the approbation of his own heart.—It has been asserted, that there is no law which permits a child to marry without the consent, or in direct opposition to the will of a parent; but the common rights of humanity surely say, that when a person has attained a certain age, he is at liberty

berty to choose for himself. Madame de Villiers, the mother of the Chevalier, despairing to succeed in her suit by the direct means of equity and justice, was known to have solicited the judges, and to have exerted undue influence to obtain their suffrage*. Madame de Villiers hoped by these methods to procure a prohibition of the marriage, at least for some time, if it could not be entirely prevented. But would it be just to keep the Chevalier and his wife yet longer in suspense? Surely not; and particularly as the Chevalier was again called by his profession into the field. He might

* In the towns in France, where parliaments are held, it is very usual to see the judges walking to the courts, with ladies, related to persons whose causes are coming on, or who are interested in the decisions, attending them on each side full dressed.

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fall; and his wife would remain dishonoured, his child deprived of his right; and death would, in such circumstances, be terrible: fearless for himself, he would go with reluctance to his duty, when he foresaw that any accident befalling him would involve in extreme misery those he loved infinitely more, and whose welfare he ought above all things to secure. In the soldier he could not lose the father and the husband; and while he exposed his life for his country, the laws of that country should guard the honour and the peace of the sacred pledges he had left, and for whom he had a right to claim protection *.

When the pleadings on behalf of the Sieur de Lalande and his daughter

* The Sieur Blaru here ends his pleadings for the defendants.

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were finished, the force of what had been advanced on both sides was thus collected by the celebrated Monsieur le Nain, * Advocate General.

He said, the first question was, whether the form of marriage had subsisted? Notwithstanding the error in the certificate, he doubted not but it had; but being defective in the requisite forms, in the place where it was contracted, and in the consent of the parents on both sides, it was undoubtedly null and of no effect.

The point therefore to be decided was, whether, under the present circumstances, his parents still refusing their consent, the Chevalier de Villiers being major, might marry Julie de Lande, the widow of the Sieur Geoffroi?

* Solicitor General for that court.

Can the opposition of the parents prevent the marriage of a son, being of the age when the law allows him to contract it?—It may, in some cases: as when a son would contract a marriage with an infamous person*, who would bring disgrace on the posterity of illustrious ancestors. But that is not here intended: the Sieur de Lalande was a gentleman, if not by descent, by his personal merit and eminent services, and his family at least unblemished, if not noble. The difference of fortune is no well founded cause of opposition. If it were, it is here out of the question, as the Sieur de Lalande is willing to make that of his daughter equal to whatever the

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Sieur de Villiers will give his son.— If Julie de Lalande had been guilty of any irregularities of conduct, either previous or subsequent to her connection with the Chevalier de Villiers, such conduct might render effectual the opposition of his parents; but no such fact has appeared; on the contrary, strong testimonies of her virtue and rectitude have been produced. If, however, seduction could be proved on the part of the lady, it is a crime so heinous, that the parents would be justified in their refusal to consent to the marriage, and the law would maintain them in it; but nothing had been alledged which could fix that imputation on *her*. Between two persons so nearly of the same age, love was the seducer of both; and with a person so calculated to inspire it,

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with temper and talents so likely to fix it, there was no need of seduction. But her father, the Sieur de Lalande, was not equally clear from this charge; for though it appeared that he was not at Metz when the connection began, yet it was clear, that as soon as he was apprized of his daughter's situation, he tried by every means in his power to make the Chevalier de Villiers adhere to his engagements. In doing so he had acted like a father anxious for the honour of his child. But there still was an appearance of constraint: the Chevalier had lived with him during his minority; and immediately on its expiration, and before he could be said to be out of the influence of the Sieur de Lalande, this cause had come on. For these reasons, the Solicitor General proposed, that the Chevalier de Vil-

liers should be obliged to return to his family for a certain time, in order that it should be entirely out of the power of the Sieur de Lalande to affect his judgment; after which, if he still persisted in using his right to marry Julia de Lalande, it should not be denied him. In regard to the danger he might incur in the ensuing campaign; as he had already returned safe, it was probable he might do so again; at least the hazard must be incurred, where the rights of paternal authority, and the good order of society, were in question.—Though the Solicitor General seemed by this speech to act as a moderator, it appears probable, from the close of it, that he was influenced by the parents of the Chevalier de Villiers; who hoped, if they could detach their son from the family

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of his wife, they should prevail on him to give up a connection so contrary to their views—But the judges were not, in their sentence, guided by the opinion of the Solicitor General. Their sentence was to this effect—That the marriage contracted between the Chevalier Villiers, and the widow Geoffroi, was null and invalid; but that she was cleared from all charge of seduction; and that he was at liberty, being now of age, to contract marriage with her, due regard being paid to the requisite forms; and the parents must withdraw their opposition.

The relation of this cause appears defective; not only in the confused manner in which the parties are indiscriminately called the Sieur de Villiers, without duly distinguishing the father from the son, but in the ob-

scurity of the recital, which says, that the Sieur de Villiers (who, for distinction sake, is here called the Chevalier) was married at the age of twenty-two—and, after three years, claimed, as he was major, his right to affirm or to renew his marriage. He could then be only twenty-five. Yet the laws of France fix the majority of a woman at twenty-five; and that of a man at thirty years old—till which time they cannot marry without the consent of both their parents.

This and some other inaccuracies and contradictions have been as much as possible remedied, without altering the facts: and the repetitions and verbiage of the pleadings, reduced.

This cause is one of those related by Richer.

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BEGGAR OF VERNON.

ON the 6th of May 1640, Jane Vacherot was married to Launcelot le Moine, a notary of the Chatelet at Paris; in 1645, Launcelot le Moine made his will, in which he named his wife the sole guardian of his three sons, Peter, James, and Louis, and died in January 1649. His will was confirmed by the sentence of the Chatelet. The mother became guardian of the boys, to whom she gave such an education as was suitable to their circumstances. She sent them to such schools

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182 THE BEGGAR OF VERNON.

as instruct children in reading, writing, and the rudiments of the Latin tongue. She had several farms in the neighbourhood of Vernon; and, as there were considerable arrears of rent due from her tenants, and other affairs which required her presence, she went thither in September 1654, carrying her youngest son Louis with her, and leaving the other two, Peter who was fourteen, and James who was about ten, under the care of her mother and a female servant. While their mother was absent, these two boys, weary of restraint, ran away, no one knew whither, accompanied by the sons of another tradesman named Coutard. The children of Coutard were met with by an exempt of the Grand Provost, who brought them back to their father; but of the children of Madame le

Moine,

Moine, no intelligence could be gained. The unhappy mother, overwhelmed with grief and consternation, flew from place to place, entreating every body she met to assist her in finding her children. Wherever she went, the idea of her lost boys followed her; and to find them appeared the first wish of her heart. In this disposition she passed one day by the Hotel Dieu, and observed sitting on the steps, a Beggar, whom she had often seen asking charity, in the same place. His child was with him, and a likeness between this child and her second son, James le Moine, immediately struck her. She approached, and examined the lad more nearly, and found that though there was some resemblance, he was not so very like her son as she had at first imagined. She gave some relief

to the Beggar, and besought him to enquire, wherever he went, for her children: she described the marks by which they might be known, and again entreating the mendicant to attend to her request, she left him with tears, after having received from him hopes, that in the course of his wandering he might meet with the objects of her search. Some months passed, and every enquiry this wretched mother had made was yet of no avail: she therefore went to a commissary, in May 1655, and having informed him of the circumstances of her loss, desired such assistance as the civil power could give her.

In the month of July following, business obliged her to go again to Vernon, where she little expected to become an object of public detestation and hatred,

hatred, on account of those children, whose flight had almost broken her heart. On Sunday the 25th of that month, the Beggar, whose name was John Monrousseau, whom she had seen on the steps of the Hotel Dieu, entered the town of Vernon with his boy. He placed himself, as usual, in the great church to ask alms, and the resemblance between this child and James le Moine, struck a number of people who saw him, and they, as is usual in such cases, communicated their ideas to others. It was asserted, however, that it originated with the Sieur Mordant, Lieutenant General of the police for that town, and the Sieur Louis, Procureur du Roy; and that vengeance, rather than justice, influenced their proceedings, Madame le Moine having refused to sell them some parcels of land, which lay contiguous

tiguous to theirs, and which they were very desirous of possessing. However that was, a notion that the little Beggar was James le Moine, became universal. Madame le Moine was considered as a cruel and unnatural mother, who had, in concert with the pauper Monrousseau, agreed to condemn one of her children to misery and want, for the sake of aggrandizing the youngest, who was supposed to be her favourite. The crowd eagerly caught the news, and a sort of tumult ensued at the gate of the town, where the mendicant stood with his child. There the Procureur du Roy appeared, and, it is said, rather excited the indignation of the people, than attempted, as he ought to have done, to reduce them to reason. Monrousseau, the pauper, was seized and hurried before the judge, who, without hearing him,

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in a very illegal manner sent him to prison, ordered irons to be put on his feet, and that his son should be taken from him and sent to the hospital. — At the same time the magistrate issued an order for the arrest of Madame le Moine. One of the officers was dispatched for her, accompanied by a guard. They brought the unfortunate woman by force, through an immense croud, who lined the streets, quite from her own house to that of the judge; and these people overwhelmed her with abuse, and loaded her with reproaches, such as only the most daring and desperate crimes could deserve. When she arrived before the judge, she was ccnfronted with the Beggar, who related all that has been before mentioned, of having seen Madame le Moine on the steps of the Hotel

tel Dieu ; but he asserted that the child was not her's, but his own, by his wife Jane le Blond, the widow of a shoemaker. He related all the particulars of his wife's death, and what had since happened to him. This examination being over, the child of the Beggar was brought in, and confronted with Madame le Moine. The child said she was his mother. She remained a whole day shut up in the apartment of the judge, who used, it is said, every menace and every art to force her to acknowledge that the little Beggar was her son James le Moine. She continued, however, firm in her refusal to assert an untruth, and, as soon as she was dismissed, she took the earliest opportunity to fly from her persecutors, and returned to Paris. But to such a pitch had the fury of the populace

lace by this time risen, that as soon as they heard she was flown, they entered her house, and broke to pieces her glasses, and furniture of every kind ; and had she remained there, she would, in all probability, have become herself the victim of their rage. A suit was now commenced. The Procureur du Roy directed Claude le Moine, the nearest relation of the children of the deceased Launcelot le Moine, to name a guardian for the supposed child ; and on the 21st of August the judge gave sentence, that the child should have a provision assigned him of an hundred livres. Madame le Moine appealed, and obtained a sentence, whereby all proceedings were stopped till the cause could be heard before the parliament of Paris. But Vernon being in the jurisdiction of the parliament of Normandy,

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Normandy, the judge would not attend to the decree, but proceeded to force from the tenants of Madame le Moine, the sum he had awarded as a support for the supposed James le Moine her son. In hopes of stopping these proceedings, she obtained a new arret, and served it on the Lieutenant and Procureur, in their public capacity, as well as by their private names; but they refused to acknowledge the authority of the parliament of Paris. A contest now arose between these two jurisdictions, the parliaments of Paris and of Normandy; which obliged the parties to have recourse to the source of power, and to carry the cause before the privy council.

Monrousseau and his child were conducted to Paris, and sent to Fort l'Eveque; there they were interrogated by Monsieur de Lamoignon: before

him the boy acknowledged Monrouseau for his father. The cause was now directed, by the privy council, to be heard and examined by the parliament of Paris. Eight days after this last sentence of the privy council, Peter le Moine, the eldest of the children who had left their mother, returned. The youngest of her three sons (Louis, who had remained with her) was dead, and the disconsolate mother received her eldest son as a gift from Heaven; but her transports, on seeing him so unexpectedly restored to her, were checked, when she found that she should behold her second son no more. Peter gave his mother an account of his unhappy travels. He told her, that when he and his brother ran away, they went to Vernon, and from thence to St. Waast, where they were obliged, having no money, to ask charity; a gentleman,

gentleman, named Montaud, saw by their manner that they were children of some creditable person: he took them to his house, and kept them twelve days, during which time the youngest of them, James le Moine, sickened and died; and Peter produced a certificate, signed by the curate, and the monks called the Brothers of Charity, signifying that his brother was buried in the burying-ground belonging to the church of St. Waast. This certificate was also signed by Monsieur Montaud, and several inhabitants of the parish. Peter, after his brother was dead, left the protection of Monsieur Montaud, and had since been a wandering beggar, suffering all the miseries of extreme poverty: till he determined to return, like another prodigal, to the bosom of his mother, who received him as the father in scripture

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received his repentant son. At length the cause was brought to a hearing, and Mr. Pousset de Montauban pleaded in behalf of the widow of Launcelot le Moine *. After opening the cause, he proceeded to accuse the judge and procureur of Vernon, of being the cause of the accusation made against Madame le Moine ; and of many illegal proceedings throughout the affair. They had confined Madame le Moine a whole day without any authority, and, by irritating the populace against her, had obliged her to fly like a criminal, from a place where her life was endangered. He proceeded to prove the marriage of his client, the birth of her children, the flight of the two elder, and the distress into which their loss threw their mother ; — the means

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she took to recover them; her application to the police for their assistance, witnessed by eight persons, which evinced a sincere desire in Madame le Moine to recover her sons. He proved, by Gabriel Alexander, a writing-master, that both Peter and James le Moine could read and write; the boy who was now produced as James le Moine could do neither; but was buried in that profound ignorance, in which those in his unhappy station live. He produced, on the evidence of Peter le Moine, proof that James le Moine, his brother, was dead; and the certificate of his interment put it beyond a doubt.

He then went on to examine the evidence of Monrousseau the Pauper; What did that say? — It gave a clear account of his wandering life. His wife Jane le Blond, the widow of a shoemaker,

shoemaker, lay-in of twins, a boy and a girl, at Mondidier; but these children died three days after their birth. They then (the pauper and his wife) went to Neuville, where they earned a precarious subsistence by working in gardens, or in the woods; and there the woman was again delivered of twins, a boy and a girl, but the boy only survived; whose baptismal register was produced. The man (Monrousseau) and his wife, afterwards went into the Limousin: being reduced to extreme poverty, and to the necessity of begging, they returned, after some time, towards Neuville; but on the way the woman was taken ill, and was sent to the Hotel Dieu at Tours, where she died. Monrousseau and his boy then proceeded to Paris; he related his being spoken to on the steps of

the Hotel Dieu by Madame le Moine, who had lost her two children, and he repeated the conversation he had with her.—Monsieur de Montauban then produced the examination of the little Beggar. He said that James Monrousseau was his father; he related the death of his mother in the Hotel Dieu at Tours; he said that he had always been accustomed to beg with his father, and that he could neither read nor write. When he was asked whether he would always beg with his father, he answered yes, that he must, for he could not leave his father. These sentiments proved that he was the son of Morousseau. He preferred his father, though poor and destitute of the means of supporting him, to the supposed mother, though rich, and surrounded with conveniences. The miseries of

cold

cold, hunger, and nakedness, to which he was born, were become habitual to him, and with his father he was content to share them. Here the voice of nature spoke.—The interrogatory and answers of Madame le Moine were next produced: anxious as she was to recover her children, her heart refused to acknowledge the supposititious one; she felt no emotion to persuade her that it was her son. A slight resemblance at first attracted her towards the little Beggar, but on a nearer inspection she found him not to be her son. She shed tears at the bitter recollection of her lost child, and entreated Monrousseau the pauper to enquire for him and his brother; supposing it likely, that in travelling from place to place, he might meet them. A resemblance there certainly was be-

tween the child Madame le Moine had lost, and the child of the pauper Monrousseau, since it had struck Madame le Moine herself; but because this boy had hair and eyes of the same colour, and some likeness in features, it did not therefore follow that the Beggar was James le Moine. In fact, their ages by no means corresponded. The son of Monrousseau was proved to be not more than eight years old; whereas the son of Madame le Moine would have been, had he been living, in his twelfth year. Had James Monrousseau then stolen the son of Madame le Moine, as beggars have been known to do? Had he taken him to excite the pity of the charitable, by interesting their feelings? — No, it was his own son, who has been accustomed to beg with him from his earliest infancy.

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The people of Vernon had conceived a notion, that this is the child of Madame le Moine; but why?—The likeness at first gave the idea, which the magistrate encouraged. The common people love wonders; a discovery of this sort is exactly suited to their taste; and when fire is once laid to the train of popular prejudice and enthusiasm, who shall say where it will stop? The magistrate, to gratify a pique against the widow le Moine, endeavoured to force her to acknowledge a child not her own; and would have torn from the Mendicant, the only blessing he had, a child whom he had brought up, and who assisted him to gain his miserable subsistence.—Then, addressing himself to the parliament, Monsieur de Montauban exclaimed, “ Gentlemen, punish these iniquitous

O 4 “ judges

“ judges—give back the child to his
“ father — let the unhappy mother
“ deplore at liberty the death of
“ the child we cannot restore to
“ her. She has sought her son —
“ she has found him in the grave—ne-
“ ver again shall she behold him ; but
“ let not her grief be embittered with
“ the sight of a phantom, raised up in
“ his place. To the poor man, his
“ son is every thing. It is on him
“ alone he can depend for bread
“ in his old age.”—In concluding, he
demanded that the proceedings of the
judges of Vernon should be annulled ;
that the child should be restored to his
former situation, and that the Lieutenant-general of the police of Vernon,
and the Procureur du Roy, should be condemned to pay all the costs and
damages, with interest.

Monsieur

* Monsieur de Foureroy, pleaded for John Monrousseau. He related his history ; that he was the son of a stone-cutter, and, when a boy, was employed to keep sheep ; that he afterwards became a soldier, and, being in garrison at Bapaume, married the widow of a shoemaker. He then related all that Monsieur de Montauban had before gone through, of the subsequent life of James Monrousseau. This man did not abandon his child, though left to him an helpless infant, and without a mother. The tenderness of the father prevailed over the inconveniencies of his situation. He nursed, he protected his son ; he shared with him the miserable morsel obtained from charity,

* Pleadings of — Foureroy, for John Monrousseau,

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and as he grew bigger, he became more and more attached to him; neither could live without the other. Here Monsieur Foureroy related every circumstance of his being spoken to on the steps of the Hotel Dieu by Madame le Moine, and brought down the history of his life to the time when he was seized by order of the magistrates of Vernon, and committed in irons to prison. Though the little Monrousseau had said, on being confronted with Madame le Moine, that she was his mother, yet it was easy to imagine that he had been tutored to do so, by the persons in whose hands he was; for since he had left them, he had constantly persisted in affirming that Monrousseau the Mendicant was his father, and that he had never known

known any other. When he was asked at Paris, whether Madame le Moine was his mother, he answered, that he wished he had so rich a mother; but that Madame le Moine was not; that his mother died at Tours. More than forty relations of the family of le Moine deposed, that the child now shewn them was not either of those which Madame le Moine had lost; added to which, the eldest of those children was returned, and had brought proof of his brother's death. Many testimonies were produced of the joy that Madame le Moine expressed at the sight of her eldest son, and no reason could be given why she would not with equal pleasure have received the second, who was equally dear to her; for why should she refuse to obey the voice of nature in one

one instance, and not in the other? — why should she disclaim the little Monrousseau, if he were really her son? — The great warmth with which Messrs. Mordant and Louis, the Lieutenant-general and Procureur du Roy, took up this affair, was very remarkable; they themselves became prosecutors, and heard witnesses. Monsieur Mordant was at the trouble and expence of sending him to Bois Gerome, one of Madame le Moine's farms, endeavouring to make her tenants and others acknowledge him for James le Moine, and all this at his own expence, pretending to undertake it all, and to disburse money for the sake of justice only, when in reality his zeal, far from being produced by so commendable a motive, was occasioned by his unjustifiable thirst of vengeance, and his desire

desire to distress and harrafs a woman who had offended him.

Monsieur Foureroy concluded, by demanding that the imprisonment of his client Monrousseau, the Beggar, should be declared illegal, his examination erased, and his son restored to him; finally, that Messieurs Louis Mordant, and Claude Louis, the magistrates acting against him, should be condemned to pay all the damages and costs, with interest.

* Monsieur Billain then spoke on behalf of the Lieutenant - general Mordant, and Monsieur Robert pleaded for the child. The former endeavoured to prove that his client had undertaken the affair with no other view than to do justice to an unfortu-

* Pleadings of Billain for the magistrates of Vernon.

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nate child, abandoned and disowned by an unnatural mother; that the voice of the people, and no observation of his own, had first obliged him to take cognizance of this extraordinary affair; that numbers, who saw the child, knew and acknowledged him to be James le Moine, and they insisted on the Mendicant's being carried before the Lieutenant Particulier, who was cousin-german to the deceased Launcelot le Moine, and who as a magistrate, and a near relation of the injured parties, had sent the pauper Monrousseau to prison. Numberless persons asserted, that the child was not the son of the Beggar, but the one who had eloped from the widow le Moine; the Beggar prevaricated and contradicted himself; and the most zealous of the people insisted that the affair

should be fully investigated. Twenty witnesses declared their belief, that the child in question was the child of the widow le Moine. Anne Pourvandine, who nursed James le Moine for three years, affirmed him to be the same; and testified also, that when she enquired of his mother after him, she was forbidden by her to mention his name. Mary Queron, servant to the widow Cretté, a relation of Madame le Moine's, at whose house she lodged, at various times, for five or six years, said she knew by his eyes, his hair, his features, and his voice, that this was the same James le Moine who used to accompany his mother. Two other women deposed to the same effect; and Francis Varlot, a taylor, who had made him a coat, gave the same evidence; so also did Catherine Timbert, and Magdalene

dalen Couturien, two relations of the family. A stronger evidence even than these, was obtained from William Aubert, a surgeon, who knew him by the scar formed by a wound, which he himself had dressed. Notwithstanding all this evidence, the Sieur Mordant determined to act with candour, and took the child to the house where the mother lodged, and where every thing appeared familiar to him. The same thing happened at Bois Gerome, the farm belonging to the widowle Moine. He knew his way thither, knew the farmer, and was known by him. With all these testimonies in favour of his being really James le Moine, and with the voice of the people so loudly demanding justice for him, what could Monsieur Mordant do otherwise than he did. He ordered further information to be taken

taken on the affair; and that the nearest relation of James le Moine should be made a party, to sue his mother for a maintenance for him, while the cause was depending.

Monsieur Robert then pleaded for the child.—He represented Monrousseau, the beggar, as one of those vagabonds in whom extreme poverty, occasioned by idleness and vice, had almost obliterated the traces of humanity: living by imposition, they scruple not to decoy away, and maim, the children of others: to such a wretch it would cost nothing to receive a supposititious child. He then repeated the contradictory answers and prevarications of Monrousseau; insisted on that strong circumstance of the boy's calling Madame le Moine his mother; on the

evidence of the surgeon, who had dressed his wound ; and on the knowledge the child had of persons he had seen, and places where he had been with his mother. He then attacked the authenticity of the evidence that went to prove the death of James le Moine. The certificate, produced by Peter le Moine, the eldest brother, proved indeed that some child was at that time interred ; but it by no means proved that the child was the identical James le Moine : it might be any other child, since they who assisted at the interment did not know him. The certificate itself was defective, and without date ; and Peter, the eldest son, from motives of avarice, or from being directed by his mother, might have attempted to establish the death of James le Moine, which never happened.

pened. Monsieur Robert then demanded, in the conclusion, that the boy should be declared the legitimate son of the deceased Launcelot le Moine, by his wife Jane Vacherot ; that the acts of the magistrates of Vernon should be confirmed ; and Monrousseau, the pauper, proceeded against according to law.

After these pleadings were finished, Monsieur Bignon, the advocate-general, summed up the evidence on both sides, with the utmost ability and impartiality ; in consequence of which, judgment was given to this effect.—That the judges of Vernon should not be prosecuted—that James Monrousseau should be declared innocent ; and his son be restored to him, and directed to obey him as his father—and that the provision assigned to

to him, out of the effects of Jane Vacherot, widow of Launcelot le Moine, should be restored to her—and the suit be finally terminated.

From Guyot de Pitaval.

END OF VOL. E.



